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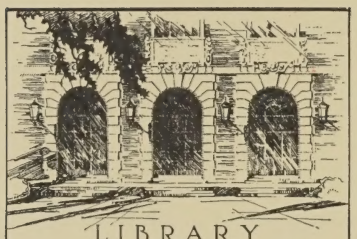

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TYPES AND CHARACTERS

Frontispiece.

Types and Characters

A Kaleidoscope : : : *By*

WALTER SICHEL :: *Author of*

"Sheridan," "Sterne," "The Sands of Time," "Emma, Lady Hamilton," "Disraeli," etc. :: :: ::

WITH FRONTISPIECE

LONDON: HUTCHINSON & CO.
PATERNOSTER ROW

TO EVERY ONE IN THESE PAGES

THIS BOOK

IS DIMLY DEDICATED.

" . . . Every one hath received a severall picture of face, and every one a diverse picture of mind ; . . . every one a form apart. From whence it cometh that there is found . . . so many naturall and unnaturall, wise, foolish, manly, and childish affections and passions in Mortall Men. . . ."—SIR WALTER RALEIGH in the Preface to his "History of the World."

"So careful of the type she seems."—TENNYSON.

"I love a ballad in print a'-life ; for then we are sure they are true."—"MOPSA" in "A Winter's Tale."

" . . . Truth which you won't wish to hear. So you had better talk with someone else."—WYCHERLEY'S "Plain Dealer."

A LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

Worshipful reader, this is only by way of a brief letter of introduction to bespeak your good will for a vagabond friend of mine who is wandering abroad in search of sunshine. Metaphor apart, he is merely a book embodying some types of character and some characters of types—a manual, so to say, of *hims* (and *hers*) both ancient and modern. In such a kaleidoscope time really matters next to nothing save in the garb and setting. What is the real distinction between the Type and the Character? It is, I think, this. Types are the offspring either of condensed tradition, which often means popular prejudice, or of creative literary genius—that is to say either of ordinary or extraordinary usance. The great characters in fiction endure as types. Falstaff, Malvolio, Shylock, Othello, Portia, Lady Macbeth (who would now figure in the cinema as "The Worst Woman in Scotland"), Cordelia, Goneril, and their like—all these have passed into accepted companionship. So have Molière's Tartuffe, Sheridan's Joseph Surface, Rabelais' Pantagruel. And so it has fared with Fielding's Partridge, Sterne's Uncle Toby and Corporal Trim, Goldsmith's Vicar, Thackeray's Becky Sharp and Captain Costigan, Disraeli's Lord Monmouth and the immortal Taper and Tadpole, Dickens' Mrs. Gamp and Mr. Squeers. Dickens, however, despite all his intense vitality of humour and power of interpretation through caricature, too often evokes characters from types rather than types from characters. His Frenchman is a stage Frenchman, his Jew a stage Jew, his Mr. Chester a stage cynic and voluptuary. He inclines to melodrama which is the Morgue of spectacular types, as witness its villains, its heroes, its squires, and its parsons. Indeed, there is no truer test of a novelist's or dramatist's genius than this power of his creations to live on as types in the mouths of men. You and I are characters that if a genius deigned to get hold

of us might survive as types and so "swim down the gutter of Time."

To sum up, Character is the individual: Type, the race. One is the species, the other the stock; one is an idiom, the other a generalisation; and the one can modify the other. They stand much in the same relation as a person does to a proverb. If I were to say—which is true—that Milton is the St. Paul's of poetry, that would be a comparison of Types, not Characters. But if I were to say that Milton was a puritan touched with Renaissance light, that would be an epitome of character. The Pharaohs are types, Rameses the Second is a character. And is it not odd that the Bible, which engrosses so many signal characters with such a fine series of types and anti-types, never uses these latter words in our noble version, though St. Paul does use the equally Greek "character," which is translated as "the express image"?

I have sought to typify my characterisations and to characterise my types in several ways. Now it is by story which borrows from characters, now by allegory which specially lends itself to types, as, on a far higher plane, John Bunyan testifies. And now it is by a direct picture or even some frivolous rhymes as interludes. Moreover, I have occasionally included things as well as persons. May I add that the first two of the Fables for Fabians have already appeared some six years ago in the *Saturday Review*? And these I have revised. A grateful acknowledgment is due to the Editor for his kind permission to include them. I wish also gladly to acknowledge my debt to a daughter for the keynote of *The Gypsy Boy* in the last part of the volume.

My portraits are necessarily miniatures. Sterne's Archbishop of Benevento abridged a treatise which had employed fifty years of his life to the size of a "Rider's Almanac." Whether I have thus been able, however imperfectly, to convey my meaning it is for you to decide. Authors can truly sympathise with their audience, for very few of them are satisfied with their work when it ends. May I be allowed to close by a quotation from a priceless guide-book to the Italian language compiled for travellers some two score and a half years ago? The particular passage expresses unconsciously and incoherently what every author knows. It makes the traveller say, with those queer irrelevant allusions both to persons and places that distinguish such didactics, "This gentleman is not satisfied with

your nephew, Charles. *I* have not been satisfied with my nieces during our voyages. There are many churches in this town, how many churches are there ? . . . Where have you bought this useful book ? I have bought it at my bookseller's. Who is your bookseller ? Dumolard frères. Are you going there ? No, am *not* going there." I do hope, kind reader, that *you* are, and in the same poetical spirit. For both in sound and sense this exquisite conversation is not unlike the newest effluence of our emancipated Muses.

And so with no excuses for thus troubling you in haste that you may repent at leisure, I am, with my best eighteenth century bow in my best eighteenth century manner, your lordship's most obliged, humble, obedient servant,

THE RASH INTRODUCER OF THIS GALLIMAUFRY.

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PART I

IDEALOGUES AND IDEALISTS

TYPES AND CHARACTERS

I.—FABLES FOR FABIANS

(1) Ethelred Limpkins

Once upon a time there was a gentle idealist who was never cross unless he was thwarted or illogical until he was answered. He lived in Hammersmith, where his family who had not troubled itself to come over with the Conqueror was domiciled ever since the foundation of the Albert Memorial. Having retired on a small Government pension which he vainly strove to increase by perpetual complaints in the newspapers, he dedicated himself to social service on a diet of nuts and cocoa. He tried strenuously to manage everybody's business but his own, and often succeeded in making his neighbours almost as disagreeable as himself. Intellectually he was rather poor, and, being a valetudinarian much addicted to flannel and closed windows, he thoroughly enjoyed ill health as well as ill humour. He fed on upside-down pamphlets, and spasmodically muddled his head by studying academic economics. And thus he contrived to catch two convenient watchwords. The one was "The community causes the opportunity"; the other, "*Your* capital is *my* income." It was the fault of his father—a careless tax-collector—that his name was Ethelred Limpkins, but it fitted him to a hair.

One day a Capitalist (who, like a duke, is, of course, born in sin and received as iniquity), having worked hard all his life, started in the neighbourhood a new and thriving industry which employed hundreds of hands. Ethelred, however, being instinctively a Collectivist of other people's energy and money, became intensely annoyed, as he always was in the face of hard facts. The Capitalist's astuteness, too, offended one whose

axiom was that fifty fools are better than one wise man. In vain did he try to distract himself by pelting the papers with fresh letters about his pension, to which were added objurgations concerning the late trains and proclamations of the early birds. He lost appetite and actually threw a tea-cup at his landlady who had ushered in an impatient dun during these importunities. He received notice to quit not only her rooms but his senses.

He was wavering on the brink of a breakdown when an inspiration occurred to him. He would stand for the County Council. His Collectivist friends, who profited by his glib sophistries, were with him to a woman, and were even unselfish enough to hire a hall for the purpose. This restored his normal spirits. The apostle of failure counted on the prospect of hearing his own voice for two hours. Thus uplifted, he quite forgot that his zeal might be damped by hecklers. How could he denounce "industrialism," how conjure up the vision of a city-Eden where beautiful handiwork designed by sandal-shooned distortionists would be achieved at will and leisure; where, too, all would be pensioners whether they toiled or not? The cruel Capitalist's contented workmen who flocked in crowds only booed: "'Ow about that 'ere penshun of yours?" Not that Ethelred was without a bodyguard—a claque of Independent Democrats who rushed to the rescue. Then indeed he took heart, and the blunter group of free workers proved no match for the second-hand syllogisms that proceeded to exude from Limpkins. He assured the gross gain-winners that vested interests were odious ("'Ow, then, about vested influences?" was a brute's interruption), that all capital should be nationalized, municipalized, and generally sized up among all. And again he harped on his old refrains that the community creates the cash, and that somebody's capital should be everybody's income. He was at his best in trying to prove that quantity means quality, when an unobserved gentleman at the bottom of the hall rose up and quietly spoke as follows:

"You tell us, as an educated man, that the community, which means you, I, and company, make the opportunity, or, in other words, that but for the background of a thing the thing would not exist. You also pride yourself on being logical. Well, then, let me ask you a question on a matter outside the facts at issue, but relevant to the method of your arguments: Who made the War?" "The Kaiser, my friend," was Ethelred's witty

retort, while others shouted "Lloyd George," others, again —for the word fills the mouth—"the Capitalist."

Among the crowd were some staunch Nonconformists, and these, too, according to taste, exclaimed "the Church of England," or "the Pope of Rome." "By no means," replied our ingenious friend who kept both his place and face: "Reasoning on your own lines, let me tell you that it was Luther who really made the War."

When the hubbub of perplexed indignation had subsided, and the cries of "ply the gyme" had died down, the speaker went on, step by step, to explain himself. "You see, if Luther had never lived there would have been no organized protestantism in England. If there had been no organized protestantism here there would have been no Act of Settlement providing for the Protestant Succession. Save for such an Act our Princess Royal would never have married the Kaiser's father. And but for this, the Kaiser would never have been born. So you must admit that by the parity of your own logic, which makes a thing's background its cause, rightly or wrongly I have proved my point. Moreover, if Puritanism had never broken out——" Here the calm voice was drowned by every section at once, and he sat down with a provoking smile. Ethelred, however, never got in, though he did obtain a rise in pension from a grateful Government at the same time that the industrious Capitalist became a baronet.

Moral: Idealogues are not infallible.

(2) The Tame Tiger

Mr. and Mrs. Shawney-Stebb were an amiable couple of universal philanthropy and unbounded love. They believed in the perfectibility not only of the species but of all creation, and they owed an abstract allegiance not only to Europe but the world. They held it a sacred duty to redress the wrongs of every country but their own, and to extend the dictates of humanity even to space. Always, and without reflection, they flouted experience in favour of experiment without foresight, and of range without values. Indeed, they were the founders of the Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Codfish, and the prime propagandists of "Votes for Vegetables." They had no sentiment about these causes, only vague "principles" based on vaguer Blue-books, and they brought up their three

children—Shelley, Primula, and Plato—on a voluntary system of Eugenics and Esperanto. They were pacifists as regards every one except their laundress, and they believed in all statistics except those furnished by facts. As for business, they abhorred its very name, and were always eager to be passive resisters where money was concerned.

One day, as a protest against "Militarism," they adopted a baby tiger—a dear little kittenish plaything which they nicknamed Libby, the short both for Libya and Liberalism. How different was Libby's lot from that of its enslaved brethren at the Zoo or its persecuted forebears in Libya! It was petted—even adored, while it readily responded to kindness and education which Mrs. Shawney-Stebb defined as the development of instinct. It had only to purr and be understood at once. Whatever it wanted it got, and often Shelley, Primula, and Plato went gladly on short commons that it might gorge itself on farinaceous food, and grow fat and fractious. None of them minded these pleasing lessons in altruism, and when Einstein propounded his immense theories, Libby instantly became a fourth dimension. So far from being disquieted they all rejoiced in the impression that they were thus becoming pioneers of the New Piety. For a long time Libby never showed its claws, and was an example to the family in doing exactly what it liked without the slightest consideration for the neighbours.

But gradually their idol began to be a trifle overbearing at home, and once or twice even to show signs of a carnivorous spirit, so that what started by sulks almost threatened to end in blows. A few earnest remonstrances, however, uttered in the best Esperanto, with a double diet of cream, sour cheese, and biscuits, seemed to work wonders. And Libby's high intelligence proved singularly amenable to the kindergarten games that it was taught—such as learning figures (by means of counters) from pretty little unpaid bills, and music by listening to the still existing German bands. It toddled demurely with the children to the nearest Socialist school, and even wore the sweet little silk sandals which Primula had embroidered in imitation of her own.

It was taught humanity by means of ideal dolls representing every type of being. Its favourite among these was one of a nigger in fetters which it strove to burst by nibbling less at the chains than at the caressable woolly head.

At this noble exhibition Shelley and Plato would shed tears. But their parents, who always rebuked sensibility as inhumanly sentimental, would solemnly warn the little tiger never to weep but to remember that everything in this down-trodden world was equal, not from sympathy, pity, or forbearance, but through right and the picked statistics which proved everything from exceptions, Sentiment was as abhorrent to them as realities, and since feeling and fellow-feeling, even if ephemeral, are a sort of belief, they could scarcely be termed believers in anything except their Blue-books.

One Sunday afternoon, however, Libby, after a meal disdainfully discarded, was actually seen to strike and gnaw the black doll, though of course this was only its play. But within a week or so he absented himself for a whole night, with a three-parts devoured joint of meat. The Shawney-Stebbs, however shocked, not only refused any punishment, but the slightest compensation to the neighbour who had thus been robbed. They relied entirely on influence and " atmosphere," imploring Libby in the name of the League of Creations to lie down and sing " Trust " in Esperanto—which it proceeded to do in the most approved style, not unattended with a wicked wink of one eye.

But after this episode, I grieve to say that Libby degenerated by leaps and bounds. Indeed, to cut a long tragedy short, its pranks culminated in the ferocious absorption, not, as might have been supposed, of the tender children, but of the podgy parents. They and it were cremated together at Golders Green. The sorrowing survivors tried hard to put themselves in their place, but, schooled in economics, found at length a melancholy pleasure in wearing one set of mourning for the three.

Moral : All tigers are equal.

(3) Sic Itur ad Astra

(*The Pathway to the Stars*)

Once a Bolshevik born at Saghalien
Landed here as a pucka-smart alien.
He became an M.P.
For—well, *not* Battersea,
But an I.D.L.P.
(New-idealist, free,
Red) Constituency—
Anti-Prot : yet pro-Episcopalian !

(4) Jonagoff

In Jonagoff, as he shall be called, we come to an idealogue of sterner stuff than cranks and weaklings are made of. He was indeed that rare specimen, an idealogue in action, wholly remote from the Wilsonian school of obstinate futilities and impotent decretals. His worst foe could not accuse Jonagoff of bleating. He was the strangest and maddest mixture of aspiration and revenge, of mild words and murderous deeds, of self-discipline and public anarchy. And although to some he seemed original, he was really second-hand in the economic theories which he annexed from Marat, Marx, and Bakunin. He united a diseased intelligence to a fanatical zeal and an inflexible will. It would be charitable to deem him a lunatic in his restless plots against Nature, against all religion, all obedience, all authority and order. He strove to invert every virtue and to hallow the harsher vices as the salvation of mankind, or must we call it "solidarity"? This process he termed "Emancipation."

Nothing to him seemed impossible if only the world could be bribed into decay. A silent and secret organizer of unflagging energy, homeless, godless, worshipless, and semi-soulless, without love, almost without appetites except the sting of ambition, he never bowed the knee, and only condescended to flattery for a masked purpose. Unnatural in his wild ideas, he yet seemed a force of nature. Steeped in science and highly civilised, he was yet subconsciously a brute, predestined to the perdition which he courted and met.

An internationalist by birth and a Russian by profession, he sprang from a Jewish father and a Swiss mother. An only child, he was born at Geneva, but followed his parents when his father had been appointed to a high medical post at Moscow. None of his surroundings were in the least Semitic—quite the reverse. He was brought up in pleasant middle-class surroundings, carefully trained in science which was to open his career, and sent to the University, where he distinguished himself. He was thrown with veiled Communists and would-be revolutionaries, who, however, did not yet attract him.

Suddenly three events changed his whole outlook. He was jilted by the girl whom he loved, and became moody and suspicious. A false charge was brought against his father, who was dismissed from his post and retired to Geneva. This made

Jonagoff both angry and envious, and one day at an earlier date he was passing through a remote village and wondering at the squalor of the quarter which the lower-caste Jews inhabited, when without warning he witnessed the atrocities of a pogrom. To crown all, his mother died broken-hearted, nor did his father long survive her, and he was left alone, a poverty-stricken orphan.

The latent strain of revenge burst out like a tornado and was added to the grudges which had already envenomed him. Once more he consorted with stupid Communists and clever anarchists. What was the good of such worms as mortals, and might it not be a benefit if humanity became extinct? His whole warped being was more and more concentred on swaying mankind to their self-destruction—that subtle form of domineering nihilism which underlies most of those invisibles who breed and head anti-social revolutions. But he decided to walk warily. Through the aid of his mother's kindred he started as a doctor in Paris, where he soon secured a first-rate practice. He published, too, some striking treatises on scientific and pathological subjects which made a mark.

He specialized in electricity and optics, and his fame spread abroad. He visited our hospitable London, lectured before the Royal Society with distinction, and was received into the best houses. His manners were good, he assumed a great modesty, and so far paid a fastidious attention to his dress. But at the same time he became more active in the secret schemes which he had never relinquished. Few who saw him in society, reserved and even aristocratic in bearing, would have recognized him as the conspirator who confabulated at midnight or dawn with the riff-raff of Europe. "Organize, organize, organize," was his lesson. "Capture, penetrate, and convert the Trade Unions. Inspire them with the idea of a false patriotism restricting allegiance to their own world-body. Sap their loyalties to King and Country. Make England," he cried, "a house divided against herself. The very greatness of Britain is your enemy. Combine, combine, combine, till the proletariat becomes the ruling power which by simultaneous and compulsory strikes of labour can hold up a whole kingdom and cripple the trade that enriches enslavers. Play on the passions of race, feud, and religion. Denounce Christianity, and yet quote Scripture for your purpose. Despoil the Egyptians of their wealth and you will rule the world. Above all, under the name of

idealism, spread insidious propaganda and correspond with all the handworkers abroad whether west or east! Never keep faith."

Long before it happened he also preached the vitiating dope of doles. Such, and much more, was Jonagoff's mocking message. He played his game like a master of chess, but he never disclosed or paraded himself. At length the Russian Revolution—like most revolutions, the work of a few exploiting the mixed furies of many—gave him his occasion. Despite manifold jealousies and antagonisms he managed to achieve control. He lived to see the world set on fire, though not burned, by his tools and confederates. He massacred without mercy and pillaged without scruple. But the intoxication of success had completely undermined his fibre of self-restraint. Excess ruined his constitution, and a woman stabbed him before he could commit suicide as an example of their destiny to mankind.

"So perish all who do the like again!" And what is the good of sinking a ship to loot the cargo? "Forewarned is forearmed." Let us learn the lesson of self-preservation and national insurance while there is time. For, should the dread hour strike, it is the idealogues themselves who will be the first to be annihilated.

(5) The Son of the Horseleech

The Book of Proverbs only mentions the two daughters of the Horseleech crying, "Give, give." But the son (and heir) of the veterinary quack is even more importunate as he clamours for a miscellaneous dole out of the public purse. "Give, give," is his doleful text, quite regardless of the gift's value, weight, use, or source—that imaginary lucky bag dangling in pasteboard skies suspended by a silken thread from an artificial sun, and ironically defying its absolute aloofness from any sort of earthly toil or production. And yet "Doth not wisdom cry also?" But what has Wisdom to do with Ignorance incarnate—with the Son of the Horseleech?

He "roars you like any sucking-dove," standing hoarse at the crossways with his proclamation of "Make straight the way of the outlawed." He is black-coated, comfortable-looking, glib, and crass beyond belief. For the first attribute he deprecatingly apologises. He is poorer than he looks, but he does not tell us if he is handsomely rewarded from propa-

gandist quarters for his quarter-of-an-hour's harangue. He has two myrmidons in patent attendance. The one is a shifty, lanky individual with a frayed collar and dubious overcoat, who at every possible opportunity ejaculates in husky accents, "'Ear, 'ear." The other is a long-in-the-tooth female who might be a deserter from the Salvation Army, and her job is to point his withering denunciations with "Shime, shime!" This she does as regularly as clockwork—an apposite metaphor, since it is mechanically connected with "Striking." A good-natured constable who guards the casual crowd surveys him with amused scorn. He is in the thick of wholly unsupported diatribes, and is decrying "the hopportunities of the rich." "Are the huniversities hopen to the likes of me and you? Certingly not."

At this juncture I mildly make bold to intervene. I ask him if he has ever heard of Mr. Frank Hodges? He utterly disowns the hard impeachment. "And yet," I venture to object, "he is one of the Trade Union leaders, and he has been educated at Ruskin College, Oxford." The satellite in the borrowed great coat drones "'Ear, 'ear," and the dishevelled lady, true to type, shrieks "Shime, shime!" with emphasis. These accompaniments are merely the "symbols" of the newest art, or the *motifs* of the newest music. They are expected at jarring intervals. But our disgruntled friend is a parasite who has perforce to proceed till he has earned his fee, and can whet (or wet) his whistle. On he perseveres with his damnatory clauses, his tall and loud talk, his windy generalizations, unsupported by a shred of evidence or even of arithmetic, unrelieved by a spark of belief or feeling or humour. And his climax is an appeal to a few anæmic youths who, he declares, are the real creators of England's wealth.

I retire from the scene, but the tolerant policeman has a word to say of the man who refuses to work except on the passions of his fellow-citizens. "That man," he confides to me, "was once in the force, but soon skedaddled. He does nothink and is fit for nothink. Out of nothink he does A1., and when he has finished, he'll be in the public 'ouse, same as you and me, sir. There are 'eaps of them about, worse luck—blighters all of 'em, bleaters some. You fairly laid 'im on the floor." This was the greatest compliment that has ever been paid to me, but I went away sorrowful. "Lord, what fools these mortals be."

II.—FOUR TRUE IDEALISTS

(1) A Saint

It is refreshing to light on idealists who are as "Hyperion to a Satyr," in contrast with our preceding pictures. Without ideals who could believe in God? But the ideals must be a vision of eternal realities, not of perverted phantoms. They must be substance, not shadow. Our Saint was a real saint, neither self-paraded nor self-applauded. In heart he was as much a disciple of St. Francis as if you had seen the Franciscan habit, or had heard the itinerant preaching to the birds. He did nothing of the kind. He went about gaily doing good, but few outside his intimates realised it. Though no longer young he bubbled over with youth and frolic. He loved everyone and everything that he touched, and they returned his affection—children, dogs, games, and the green pastures included. He had never married out of some delicate scruple. And yet how much had some woman lost?

His story, though he never dwelt on it, would be sad if the past had not irradiated the present. He began with everything that could quicken life—a devoted mother and sister, affluence, esteem, many friends, and considerable accomplishments. He was a proficient in most games, a sportsman fond of cards and racing, most generous-hearted both in school and university companionships and in large-handed and large-hearted sympathies. But on a sudden the bright horizon was darkened. His mother and sister died, a friend betrayed a trust, and he was left with a pittance which need not have been so small but for a quixotic sense of honour which he pushed even to extremes. Out of the wreck of his fortune he bought an annuity and retired to a small provincial town. It was a place gradually developing through one of its ancestral

inhabitants, who was eventually almost ruined by patriotic enterprise. It was the old story of new men and old acres. The immigrants flourished. The sober old citizens declined by invasion. The old local industries dwindled. The country town with its overlooking church and ancient houses fast became a centre of third-rate luxury. Even the cottages were sacrificed to grasping week-enders.

Our Saint was friends with all, and to all ; in much straitened circumstances munificent to a fault. He organized boys' clubs, played with them, laughed with them, yet maintained complete discipline. He taught them billiards, and a public spirit in all their games. When at length they went forth to the War in many of the regions over which he had once roved so light-heartedly, they corresponded with him regularly and affectionately. Like the old princelets, he was the father of his people with no assumption of royal paternity, but a strong realization that " the care of discipline is love." After the War, amid countless calls on his living sympathy, he befriended and advised the ill-used ex-soldiers and their families, rejoicing even when, like Don Quixote, he was deluded.

He had, of course, his Sancho Panzas, and often he deferred to their commoner sense. He sat on endless committees, never as a voice but as a human, yet often a restraining, influence. He helped the down-trodden aspiring curate. All were his friends and none his protégés. His tact was so high-bred, his fellow-feeling so instinctively noble, that he gave self-denial the appearance of self-indulgence. In private friendship his life-boat-like power of rescue was unbounded. In adversities or disasters he always appeared at the right moment and as if it were a personal pleasure. The very contact of his presence was as if health had entered a sick-chamber.

He owned an artistry, a discrimination in well-doing ; he perceived the perspective of joy and sorrow, and was ever a connoisseur in fellow-feeling ; he possessed the much-travelled heart, and would have withered as a self-centred recluse or an experimenter in new-fangled systems. He imparted much more than himself or than any set dedication to " social service " could have exhaled. It is impossible to describe the effect that somehow he produced. Whatever he gave, whether by hand or converse, was of the very best. In his third-class railway carriage he was ever a monarch. And always his inward holiness was never disfigured by sour pietism. In the

world he was a man of the world, and his heavenly cynicism which took a charitable bent created a far more bracing impact than all the soft (or hard) sawder of attitudinizing puritans could ever have achieved. His sense of humour was as forcible as his ironic good-nature. He knew life—masculine and feminine—through and through, and, like all who are natural masters of their subject, he loved to play on it as a violinist does on his violin.

One more characteristic. All with him was neck-or-nothing—his chivalry, his sympathy, his whole outlook. And yet for others he was moderation itself—the golden mean of a wise and tolerant prudence. In his own affairs, intellectually, humanly, or patriotically, the in-between did not exist. He wiped it out of view and would rather die heroically, calling his end an accident, than live on in congenital, congenial comfort.

Although he would have been the first to resent the term, he was, in fact, a spiritual genius. Ah me, how rare are such inspirations in the advertised bead-roll of conventional and self-satisfied philanthropy! Genuine idealists are no more self-conscious of idealism than was Shakespeare of his transcendent creativeness. Their revelations simply bubble out from them by their sheer delight in their scarce-felt faculties. They "do good by stealth and blush to call it fame." They neither need nor heed their haloes. They work miracles unknown to themselves or even to such as they regenerate. Whatever the pulpiteer may preach, no one can love everybody, but he can love to love everybody. And that is the sole meaning of a saint, who depends on no visible shrine or sanctuary. Everything is not good, but good is everything.

(2) A Soldier

Alas! my happy-warrior idealist has vanished, not in the Great War, during which, as brigadier-general, he commanded so valiantly and faithfully against a thousand obstacles, including that of a vacillating Cabinet which he warned in vain. He left us in peace-time, beset by the tragedies of his own hearth long and nobly concealed. To him the discipline and organization of the Army meant everything, its spirit was his soul. Of gentle birth, he had risen from its ranks years before Armageddon burst on us. In the Army he found his best ideal —that service was perfect freedom, that none could rule who

could not obey. A disloyal soldier was for him inconceivable, and though he faced the after-symptoms of civil apathy or infidelity with the bold gaze of the higher cynic, as a soldier he was ever an optimist.

The Army and Navy were the fine flower of England. Their corporate example would ever stand between faint-hearted treachery and the grandeur of British tradition. In all such matters he was an old Roman martinet, inflexible, imperturbable ; on solid ground, however the variable gales might blow, driving the dust and chaff before them. His favourite text was "Let us put on the whole armour of God." Yet in temperament he was far more of a cavalier than of a puritan. Bayard, Gaston de Foix, Falkland, Ormonde—these are his prototypes. The dour fanatic was his abhorrence. With his eyes fixed on the eternal lodestars, he loved laughter and mirth and all that wreathes life with charm. Full well he knew that "the laughing hero wins the day." To play the game was his one end and desire, and to hear him ejaculate "by G——" when something went wrong on parade was "a moral."

"Act well thy part, there all the honour lies." Where "Faction's diplomatists, weak moralists of nothing done," interposed, he turned his back. Where doubters insinuated subtle glosses or prattled of "the larger patriotism," he showed neither patience nor mercy. He saw the whole world through field-binoculars, and by consequence saw much further and with clearer vision than the play-goers can do with their opera-glasses. He prized length and intensity of outlook, not width or variableness of view. And such are they who have made Britain great and without whose courage and simplicity of direction she would remain great no longer. His house was built on a rock.

. . . . .
While petty fumblers fume and fuss,
The soldier-soul delivers us.

The simple soul that sternly scorns
Blowers of bubbles for the mass—
Thin iridescent shams—and warns
How soon such smooth delusions pass,
Obeying ever, he commands,
Who all can suffer, all can dare.
. . . . .

The soul aspires. Who smugly plods
Beholds no vision, ne'er can fling
Poor self towards it. Man is God's
In sin—if sin be suffering—
Yes, even from sin's ordeal by shame,
He draws imperishable powers.
How doubly in the matchless flame
Of self-renouncement God is ours,
Absorbing all in quickening fire—
For Man, not God, is God's desire.

(3) A Sage

Do we know a sage when we see him ? Very seldom, I trow, unless, like Socrates, he goes about hustling the market-place, and owns a Plato of some kind to glorify him. He needs the very thing that he never wants—a looking-glass. But those whom their own generation hail and advertise as philosophers are constantly the reverse—babbling pretenders to the throne, who vainly claim to explain the inexplicable through the unintelligible.

Our particular Sage belonged to neither of these categories, being neither officious nor verbose. He was an extraordinarily well-balanced man, a philosopher not only by nature but by knowledge. The scion of a wealthy family, wealth never influenced him, save as a means of benefiting mankind. Nurtured for business, he retired from it directly he had won a competence, and to this was afterwards added a large inheritance. In middle age he was called to the Bar and soon acquired a great reputation as a consulting lawyer. All along, though few were aware of it, he sought to ameliorate and to cheer misery. He bought a whole street of slums, erected decent habitations, and brought himself into human touch with its inhabitants. No one knew how he toiled for others in the midst of an industry almost miraculous. The philanthropic committees on which he sat were numberless, and on every one of them he studied individual needs even more than the general good. He was Conscience incarnate, and to his ethical side he added a spirituality of intellect and wisdom.

He "scorned delights and lived laborious days"; he strained his powers to breaking point. I sometimes thought

that in many ways he reincarnated Spinoza, the supreme philosopher, simple in life, subtle in brain, who sacrificed all without a pang and earned his living by grinding the glasses for spectacles—those spectacles through which, as Heine finely said, the thinking world has ever since been surveying eternity.

Our friend surveyed everything *sub specie eternitatis*. It is related that Spinoza, after his father's death, was legally entitled to a considerable sum which his sister disputed. He brought an action against her to vindicate justice, and won his case. But immediately afterwards he gave back the money to his sister. That was very much what our Sage would have done under like circumstances. Not only did he own a perfect good-will towards men, but he brought it to bear on benevolence and service with a prudence and calculation that go rarely hand in hand with philanthropy. He looked so far, and acted so near. With a mind naturally abstract and capable of universal survey, he, so to speak, abased it for others in the course to which his heart was devoted.

His generosity was never spasmodic, and he was able to benefit mankind all the more by his tense economy of means. All with him was considered as well as considerate. And yet his beneficence was as much self-realization as is the artist's, the poet's, the musician's mastery of expression. He was not devoid of that humourous sense of perspective which alone recommends virtue and renders it humanly efficient. He was never quick in his irony or in anything else, but his measured pace in the perception of contrasts between show and substance lent it a solidity all his own. I recall that once, in discussing the character of contrivers, he pleaded extenuations even for the tortuous Becky Sharp, who surely should be judged by her first surroundings. One should never be too hard on strugglers contending with chances that they have bravely surmounted. And so he had a sort of shy pity for far inferior onhangers that quite wiped out any resentment at their shifts. He never felt himself aggrieved by ingratitude, and thus he had nothing to forgive.

In aiding others he would rather be deceived with his eyes open than shut his ears to their appeals. Where his great mind sometimes failed him was on the plane of values. He would rate a sincere professor of absurd abstractions, dipped in a moral atmosphere, as highly as the practical wisdom of more

scientific minds. But he did not disdain a brilliant levity that dealt lightly with pretentious professions. Wit and charm he ever appreciated, though he was not the type through which they spoke or sparkled, and there was even a sort of awkwardness about his movements which made him admire grace the more.

Sub specie eternatitis—under the form of eternity—that, I repeat, was his unconscious watchword. Eternity, indeed, was so familiar to him, so undissociated from daily life, that, when death interposed, he gently brushed it aside and resumed the tenor of his way. How faintly do we recognise a true nobility of soul till the body which encases but cannot clog it is no more. We lack Spinoza's spectacles, which just now are out of date. There they lie, neglected and unadvertised, in some remote and dusty lumber-room far from the madding crowd. And yet if the bargain-hunter found them, and could establish their pedigree, what would they not fetch at Christie's ?

All the same, nobody would wear them. They would remain among the curiosities of museums and would rank with the first editions of their author's " Ethics " or " Tractatus." The Dutchmen who bought them troubled little about these, and probably never knew who made their lenses, unless the optician told them that it was that odd-looking, dark little fellow, with the big eyes and bushy hair, who had joined a strange sect and never cut any figure in the world.

If gossip was their foible—and why not ?—they might add that his landlady liked him very much indeed (a rarity), and that a certain daughter of a famous doctor thought no end of him—her name itself being " Ende." But there ! there was no accounting for tastes, and the man was a harmless crank who had no taste for money and ground excellent lenses which he was able to offer on very favourable terms to regular customers. This they would say, and perhaps more, about our unspectacular genius who lived on what he alone saw through the spectacles which were his handiwork. Yet which survives —the optician and his customer, or is it not rather Spinoza ?

(4) A Curate

Why is it that the type of a curate has been so often ridiculed on the stage and in fiction, that in the past he would be often treated as a lackey and sometimes be forced to marry

the lady's-maid, that, some forty years onwards, he would be satirized as Miss Austen's arrogant, ignorant Mr. Collins; that even to-day, when sorely straitened, he does not meet even with the half-sympathy which Trollope extended to his Mr. Quiverful? I think it is because he is an easy butt and is regarded as hardly a part of life at all. The professional voice, too, lends itself to a rude mimicry. But I feel sure that nobody could make fun (except himself, and very good fun he made) of the particular curate I have in mind. A gentleman born and bred, he had been most popular both in his college and with his university. He was a frank, jolly fellow, and a jolly life in those hey-days he led.

Suddenly it struck him that he might do better, in the sense of doing more, if he took holy orders than if he went into a crack regiment to which his father had predestined him. He seemed to move more easily among the commoner folk than among the rest, just because they were more spontaneous. Besides, he felt a real impulse to devote himself to Christ—the Christ not of theology but of redemption by fellowship. The Gospels called to him not as a creed, or even as an austere and severe form of renunciation, but as a charm working through charm—a charm that exorcised all that was ugly or revolting.

He had not much use for St. Paul, though he knew that he was the great apostle of fervent organisation. Indeed, he used to say that the lovely poem on Christian love could never have been written by him. So, despite many a home-heart-burning, and some family frictions, a deacon he was ordained, and his first curacy was in an opinionated country town, whose magnates were even smaller than its ambit.

The vicar was a narrow and vain man, who loved to hear himself preach and left all the hard work to his far-from-docile curate. Even when he preached with freedom his shafts were aimed at persons. His most daring sermon was a hardy annual one on the Good Samaritan, who, he would point out with a withering side-glance at the dissenting chairman of the local branch of the C.O.S. Committee, never stopped to enquire into catastrophes like the Charity Organisation Society, but took personal trouble, and left an IOU. behind him. Moreover, however unorthodox this benighted deliverer may have been, he knew that he was rescuing a man who had fallen among thieves, with a sour look at the leading butcher who might have attacked the well-to-do Levite, yet had chosen

to rob the poor instead of the rich (with another look at the leading grocer). But the masterpieces of which he was proudest were his orations in due season on the dogmas of the day. He was nothing if not positively certain of everything, including his conjugal affection about which his bullied wife was secretly an agnostic.

Of course, as in duty bound, he bowed an obsequious knee to Lady Isabella Gingham, who honoured her dreary little-big house for two months in the year. She was very musical and was resolved that all should know it, choosing the parish church for her concert-stage as a soloist in anthems, and introducing her protégés to its organ-orgies. None was more subservient to her than the vicar, except the mayor (the grocer aforesaid), who had the bells rung at his own charges for every birth or marriage in her family, and in return had actually been invited to tea with her in London, as the *Cornmarsh Gazette*, which he edited, did not fail to commemorate.

The curate was a great success with the humbler sections. He chatted with, comforted, and helped them. He made no distinctions between the church-goers, the chapel-goers, or the no-goers-at-all. He smoked with them and drank with them, romped with the children, showed them photographs of beautiful pictures, and blended counsel with entertainment. He taught them games and a public-school spirit. He cracked jokes with them, and even instituted a theatrical club. The vicar gradually grew very jealous of his popularity, if the truth must be told. These were undignified things that he himself could not do. He took too much upon himself, this son of Levi, and he actually endeared himself to the vicar's wife and children. Lady Isabella quite agreed with the vicar. A theatrical club indeed! What would become of the solo-exhibitions during her two months of royal residence!

Well, one Whit-Sunday, the vicar, being laid up with a slight bronchial attack misnamed bronchitis, was forced to surrender his pulpit to the curate. He offered him generously his last year's Whit-Sunday sermon, wherein he descanted with an almost affable intimacy on the Holy Spirit, though he never so much as mentioned the third person of the Trinity ("But, *proceeding*," as he would emphasize it in his phrasing of the Athanasian Creed) all the rest of the year. But the curate, with that delightful smile of his, was tactful in his firm refusal.

"Thank you so much," he said, "most kind of you, and

from *your* lips the sermon, which I well remember, would work wonders. But from mine—Oh, think of it ! Everyone would say that I was a mean plagiarist. No, no. Second-hand is second-best, don't you think ? I should be found out, and nobody would ever trust me again. I will be as short and simple as I can, and I only hope that the collection won't suffer."

So the curate preached, and, strange to say, the church was packed to overflowing. They came in from the highways and byways to listen. And the message of his sermon was wholly undoctrinal. He preached on atmosphere and on good-fellowship, which, he said, was truly the Holy Spirit. He told them, too, that the Spirit, the vivifying breeze, blew where it listed, that it was in the marriage feast of Cana quite as much as in the house of Simon the Pharisee. That it should steep all our joys and sorrows as the sunshine steeps the varied landscape. That it was of no real avail to fossilize such a radiant presence into stony dogmas which could only substitute something inanimate for life itself.

This, and much more, in twenty minutes, and he added that any one of them who could not enter into the spirit of everything was like a traveller abroad who required an interpreter. He assured them, too, that the difference between Sunday and Monday was that on Sunday you too often professed to be something which you were not, whereas on Monday you were something—good or the reverse—which you were. With all its faults he preferred Monday, and what one had to do was to bring more of Monday into Sunday and feel the pleasure of making it a quickening spirit. We were all so dead-alive. " The letter killeth."

All this was reported to the vicar, and incensed him afresh. He began almost to hate this curate as a revolutionary. In fact, the event so disgusted him that he was laid up for quite a long time, and was unusually amiable to his wife.

Then an idea occurred to Lady Isabella, whose two months of local supremacy were drawing to a close. The vicar needed a change of air, and someone else far greater than the vicar needed it, being none other than the most potent preacher in London, the man who most secularized the holy and hallowed the secular, a magnet attracting the Tramp to the Duke and the Duke to a Tramp, the originator of twenty societies and centres for the distribution of elevating enjoyments. True, he was a sort of semi-Socialist, but which Conservative of Lady Isabella's

pliant calibre was not? It was an inspiration. Bring him down as temporary vicar, and where would the curate be? One artist is worth twenty amateurs.

The plot succeeded. Down came the Reverend Jerome Lamb, and won all hearts. He was so engaging, exhilarating, and broad-minded, and he struck the rock of a dry theology till it gushed with refreshing streams. Nobody could say that he was unorthodox or heretical. It was his point of view that mattered. Aspect with him was everything. Thus the doctrine of original sin was modernized by the view that we were all, even the best, angels astray. We were never to call ourselves "miserable sinners."

Moreover, secularly, he countenanced even the dole and the right of a factory hand to control the business. His economics had nothing to do with economy, public or private, nor did he quite realize that the well-to-do who assist the down-trodden to do well and are in human touch with them disprove his theories of the State as Schoolmistress. His sermons amused as well as instructed. He took the curate's dramatic club in hand and trained them alike in mystery-plays and startling revelations of slum-life. He was a capital bridge-player also, and the golfers liked him because his stories were so much better than his golf, and because both they and it were gracefully amusing. The only drawback was that his pretty wife dressed so well. That would never do for Cornmarsh, where only Lady Isabella, during her two months' sojourn, had any right to dress at all.

So our poor curate was in eclipse. He still pursued his popular rounds, and on the cricket field he remained at least a fifty not out. But, on the whole, though he worked as hard as ever, he took a back bench. Not that the newcomer was ever disagreeable to him—on the contrary, he was perhaps too agreeable. He was often asked up to the vicarage, and he was begged always to preach the evening sermon. But what was he among so many? By the side of this Admirable Crichton he was a bumpkin and a dummy. This acting vicar (in both senses of the adjective) even promised him to speak to the bishop with a view to a living. It was a great temptation at this moment, as we shall shortly see, but he politely declined. How could he, a simple and honourable man, lie under obligations to one whom in his heart he misliked, whose political propaganda, if unchecked, might vitiate the industry and self-

respect of the masses ? No, Esau would not owe a farthing to Jacob the supplanter, though, on the other hand, he would not murmur but simply persist.

Now it so happened that some two years before this time a very alluring young widow had taken up her abode—for the budget-reasons that drew so many outsiders together there—in Cornmarsh. Gradually she had grown to admire and revere our curate excessively, sharing his outlook and almost rivalling him in comparative poverty. They had co-operated in many of the parish works, as if she had been the Queen of Sheba and he King Solomon. True, she was not intellectually his equal, which made her, as it made the Queen of Sheba, all the more appreciative of his powers. He had searched his heart and felt that if only one day she could be his companion in all his enthusiasms, he would indeed be far happier than he deserved to be. What would he not do to make and keep her happy, if, alas, such an Elysium were to be dreamed of ?

But gold in this age was of something worth, as apparently it was not in King Solomon's, and even if she would have taken him—of which he was far from sure—he would be a brute to drag her down to the drudgeries which, under present conditions, must be the punishment of his wife. So he held his peace, helped her by sympathy and counsel, but even assumed a cold and impartial air in her presence. Little did he know what a woman as fond of him as she was could effect.

She had an attached brother in Devonshire who was a close ally of the then Bishop of Exeter, and she gave this good brother no peace till he had promised to speak to his friend on behalf of the wonderful curate who had been so evilly entreated by the hide-bound vicar and the scheming Lady Isabella Gingham, and was yet bearing every buffet as only a true saint could. Suddenly, at the very moment when the vicar returned in perfect health and self-complacency, our curate received a letter from the bishop to say that he had received many accounts of his capacities and faithfulness from many quarters (Heaven defend that bishop from the doom of Ananias !) and therefore ventured to beg his acceptance of a Devonshire living, where, though the stipend was but six hundred a year, there was an interesting parish and a comfortable rectory in perfect order.

The curate could not believe his eyes, and his heart smote him when he reflected that probably the vicar, who from a sense

of delicacy must never be thanked, had contributed to this miracle. He told the fair widow of this extraordinary event which might afford him a wider scope and influence. He asked her advice, and she, while professing great surprise at the ravens which were to feed Elijah, begged him certainly to accept. There was something of other acceptance in her eyes which he then could not withstand, and so, humbly and happily, he preferred his suit. The event was a nine days' disappointment in Cornmarsh, and shortly afterwards they were married at her own home.

The vicar, on his return, was thunderstruck, for where could he find his equal at one hundred and fifteen pounds a year? You will, I fancy, be pleased to hear that the vicar suffered much from the parish-contrast between him and his caretaker, the Reverend Jerome Lamb, who had hastened to congratulate his promoted rival. The whole episode caused a rift between the vicar and Lady Isabella which has not quite been mended up to this day. So, in this instance, the saint met with his rewards upon earth.

III.—TWO WIVES

(1) Martha

A night of memories and sighs
I consecrate to thee.
—Walter Savage Landor.

Latent in human beings there have always been, so to speak, those two eternal monastic orders—the active and the contemplative, and in the long roll of true feminine idealism we will single out two actual characters only, the two so beautifully shadowed forth in the Martha and Mary of the Gospels, and so constantly reincarnated throughout the ages. The Martha whom we knew and loved was the embodiment of alert energy. Busied about many things, she was never in any degree a busybody. On the contrary, every shade of meddlesomeness was abhorrent to her, as being related to genuine activity much as coquetry is to love, or flattery to praise. All her widespread activities, indeed, were born of love and flowed from it as a river does from its source in its passage to the vast ocean beyond, and it was a river with deep undercurrents that never frothed or bubbled on the surface. To repeat Shakespeare on Hermione :

. . . All her acts
Were Queens.

She did the least thing as if it were the largest and the last, dignifying the little and ever daring the great. She rose above all her surroundings.

Married to that most trying of contrasts, "the artistic temperament," which her uncommon sense heartened and steadied, she yet, perhaps, drew from it a something of volatile salt that enlivened her strength and lent flavour to her force.

Her husband's unmethodical litter was indeed a house to set in order, but she was no preaching methodist, and she so set it with deft invisible fingers as never to irritate,provoke, or confuse. She threw herself into all his interests, became the friend of all his friends, not through adoption, as it were, but inheritance. An admirable hostess by virtue of the diplomacy of heart more than head, and the tact which springs from perceptive feeling, she made all the rough places plain and the crooked straight.

She loved all games, outdoor and indoor—golf and bridge especially—though how she found time for everything, and the right time, was her own secret. Her mind was as open as her hand, and any new adventure enchanted her, yet nothing about her was restless. She knew neither fear, fussiness nor morbidity, and she used to say that every day she thanked God for nothing so much as her splendid health. In everything, including her attire, which was ever tasteful, she made the best use of the best material, and somehow if she handled an inch it turned into an ell. Nothing seemed impossible to her, and she created opportunities as if by magic.

I feel sure that if the scriptural camel had entered the house she would somehow have made it go through the eye of a needle—that needle so indelibly associated with her leisure moments. And over all she waved the wand of mirth : to hear her laughter was to catch it. You would know her by her laugh wherever she was—the laugh of a waterfall under the summer sun, fresh, pure, clear, rainbow-laughter that danced the mists and shadows away. All that is shoddy offended, though it did not incense her because she saw through it at once and knew instinctively by a coin's ring whether it was false or true. Her natural modesty never tempted her to impair convictions undecorated by fancy. For she was not imaginative : maybe she was too literal both in phrase and insight. But shallowness was to her unknown.

During the War how she worked, not superficially, but at the essence of things, staying up all night to refresh returning soldiers, packing all day to give them and the prisoners cheer, collecting savings-certificates to help the national thrift. Nor did she, during those anxious, strenuous days omit one jot of her normal services. Poor, feckless, distressed ladies, poor, senseless neighbours, she toiled and decided for them all. She turned gossip into charity. As for her own family

she would sit up for them all night, mending, counselling, caring for each, despite the distracting air-raids. Never was an idealist more practical, more bracing, more regardless of the abnormal, more ingenious in restoring the natural. Each of her moments was a month. And never was there a being more large-hearted and generous-handed. She gave without stint but with shrewd discernment, and she so supervised her little store that somehow there was always enough and to spare. The widow's cruse was nothing in comparison with her husbandry.

She had but two sons. The one, a gallant soldier before the War, fell in defending a most critical position near Ypres early in 1915—a youth of exceptional charm and a whimsical humour which heartened his men to the bitter end. The younger, of the golden voice and the golden example, after infinite hardship and courage, perished at the very close, when all supposed that he at last was safe. This broke her heart. He had been her mainstay during the first loss, and the idol of her heart throughout. She never murmured, but at length even *her* heroic fibre succumbed. She froze into herself.

For six years she languished in an agonising breakdown, chafing at the thought that she whose whole life was a glad care for others should now by a cruel fate to others be a care. And then calmly but peacefully the heroine flickered out, leaving a desolating gap behind her. It was not sympathy for which she craved, though she appreciated it, but the active, renovating influence which was the breath of her nostrils. All the joy of this had fled, though, dauntless to the last, she still tended and toiled for her home. But the strong love that she felt pent within her would not out. The ordeal of strange suffering had petrified it. She who had never blamed others now blamed herself. Her shoulders could no longer bear the burdens of love.

If she had a fault it was due to her controlling will. What she had once determined she would never allow to fail. Her temper could be imperious if ever she was crossed in a well-considered resolve. For her nothing was difficult or obscure. She saw clearly what she believed and unhesitatingly pursued it. And now at length there was no path to follow: the light of life had been quenched.

At times in those latter days she would sit down alone at the piano and play her favourite pieces of Beethoven and

Schumann, trying, I think, to rekindle her old emotions and to free her soul from its physical dungeon. But she would never sing as she once used to so blithely. The music of her voice was dead, and eventually even to hear it was pain unspeakable. Like Rizpah:

> She cannot weep. Her stifled breath
> Can scarcely plead. She whispereth
> *My sons, my sons are done to death.*
>
> . . . .
>
> Beneath the moon, beneath the sun,
> She sits and shivers. One by one
> The lights that lit her soul are done.

But let me recall her as she was in her prime. I think that of all her husband's fugitive pieces, she, with her inherent sense of humour, liked best not the studied histories but a light, short story which he published early in their married life. He had been called to the bar, but had scarcely responded to the summons, and was too fond in his Georgian way of collecting imposing antiques which much embarrassed her—a whole vanload arriving of clocks that had (presumably) belonged to Queen Anne, lockets that Mary Queen of Scots was alleged to have worn, black and white elephants, of huge eighteenth century furniture which, laughingly, she relegated to limbo—so like him, poor dear, so unlike her! Well, his published story was this:

A young barrister in comparatively easy circumstances had the same foible. Carts of these imaginary treasures arrived at the door, to the keen, half-veiled chagrin of his appraising and harried bride. She said little, but her silence spoke volumes. Within a week he went for a month on circuit. And immediately she consulted with his dearest friend. What on earth was to be done with this huge convoy—the curiosities of literature indeed. Would it be wrong to consign them to Christie's for disposal? The friend agreed that it would be right. Instantly the deed was done, not without some compunction on the part of the partner of *his* joys and *her* sorrows. At length he returned rather earlier than was expected. He was in a state of high excitement. She would remember, he said, that wonderful find of his a few months ago. He had just turned into Christie's on his way home—he could not resist

it—and what did she think that he had found ? It was hardly to be believed. He had lit on exact duplicates of the very treasure-trove that he had so recently brought home. It was not within the bounds of connoisseurship to withstand the temptation. They were going at extraordinarily low prices, and he had bought them all—an excellent investment. He (or she) could easily sacrifice something as an offset. And within a week the old incubus was re-deposited at the doorstep of the little house, which again they overwhelmed ! He was not in the least crestfallen, that sanguine man. It was a bitter laugh that escaped her, but laugh, as always, she did, and life proceeded as usual.

Ah me ! how small are the little ironies of existence compared with its tragedies ! And in those happy times who could have suspected the tragedies impending ?—tragedies compared with which those of the Greek tragedians so hysterically bewailed on their stage, or those of the helpless Job so largely and even heartlessly redressed, seem as nothing. The same unconquerable will sustained her in all life's vicissitudes, great or small. It was Swift, the most earnest of ironists, who wrote that " Life is a tragedy at which for awhile we sit as spectators and then take our own part in it." So it was with our dear Martha. She never lost head, but eventually she was forced to lose headway—she never lost heart, but Fate broke it. She lost and missed *herself*, and groped after the vanished vision. If ever there was one of the noble and lovable army of martyrs, surely it was she.

> At glorious deeds, at sufferings well-endured,
> Yea, at life's thread snapt with its gloss upon it,
> Be it man's pride and privilege to weep.

(2) Mary

> . . . She was sent forth
> To bring that light which never wintry blast
> Blows out, nor rain nor snow extinguishes,
> The light that shines from loving eyes upon
> Eyes that love back till they can see no more.
> —Walter Savage Landor.

Mary seemed to her friends—and they were many —a perfectly happy woman. Most that the world could offer

appeared to be hers. She sprang from a Victorian home of exceptional wealth and refinement—intellectual, public-spirited, aspiring, and highly considered. As a mere girl she had married a strong, self-made and self-reliant man who had hewn his way in the world and attained a firm position, a man trusted and respected by all who knew him, a man conscientious and honourable with the strictest sense of duty, and who revered her father almost as much as *she* revered him. Her mother disapproved of this match, though she yielded to the wisdom of her husband and never openly avowed her dislike—she was far too diplomatic for that.

Mary had two sisters, the one of high intellect, the other a graceful beauty in the conventional style. Mary herself was beautiful, but not at all in the conventional manner. She was "like music on the waters." In music her whole soul was steeped, and music sang out of her deep violet-grey eyes, the rhythm of her lips, her every tone and movement. Even her quiet playfulness was music, and her soft laughter sounded like a scherzo.

She had perplexed her parents. Delicate in childhood, in girlhood graciously silent yet inwardly restless, overshadowed by her sisters and adoring her inflexible parents, she had been, in a sense, the Cinderella of her circle. No prince had picked up her crystal slipper, yet, brooding and imaginative, she had made a prince of one who deeply loved and yearned to marry her. For divers reasons, however, her parents misliked this match, and the lovers therefore were sundered before any decisive step had been taken. It would have revolted her whole nature to play the mutineer. Violets are never rebels: you must look to flowers less humble and fragrant, like orchids or tiger-lilies, for defiance. For her to disobey her parents would have been as the sin of witchcraft.

So, though inwardly tortured, she never betrayed her unhappiness, but kept repeating in her heart one of her favourite texts: "Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted within me! Hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him who is the health of my countenance and my God." As she spoke so seldom and looked so pale, though her natural complexion was that of a peach on a sunny wall, her mother declared her hysterical, and called in the doctors, who found nothing organically wrong, and only prescribed a change. Her father spoke tenderly to her, and sent her to stay with

some friends abroad. Her sisters comforted her with a kiss, and "poor Mary." It is no solace for Cinderellas to be called "poor" by their sisters, but it was not their fault if they did not quite understand a nature so sensitive and spiritual. So abroad she went for nearly a year, and returned apparently a transformed creature.

Then the rock of defence came into view, transferred from far lands where he had managed her father's great business with such signal success, foresight, and integrity. That father, who was a man of silence, could not find words enough to express his esteem of his sterling virtues. Though her betrothed could never plumb the depths of her being, after his own way he truly loved her. He would shield her and spare her every vexation: she should lean on him, and in everything he should decide. This would be shielding her. He would be faithful till death, and so he wooed her much as Othello wooed the gentle Desdemona.

Time went by after their marriage—sometimes with a laggard and heavy step, though she trusted his wisdom implicitly and consulted his every wish, however some of his commands may have grated upon her. Children were born into whose nurture she threw her whole reserve of devotion; among them an only boy who showed some early promise and on whose lips she hung. Like the great example of Madonna-love and sweet self-sacrifice, she "kept all these things and pondered them in her heart." More and more her heart became her sanctuary. From the glare of life she shrank as the traveller recoils from an eastern sun. Into the stilly cool of that pent-up heart more and more she retired. She admired her husband, and had no fault to find save that somehow she felt his touch on her feelings as rough sometimes and clumsy. To the full—and she thanked God daily for it—he kept his troth and he was proud of her, her good-breeding and perfect manners, as of something above him (which she denied), and yet as of something in sore need of incessant protection. Money should never trouble her. She should never sign a cheque or pay a bill or take any part in the rough-and-tumble of life. And yet again and again she longed to do so.

As, increasingly, she dwelled in the shrine of her own pure bosom, she craved to transcend formal religion and church-observance. Her heart ached for all distress, and she begged for liberty to work among the poor. This wish, to her joy,

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was granted. For with him everything was parcelled out in just departments. There was a religious department, a social department, an annual *en masse* travel department, an educational department, an accomplishments department, an hospitality department, a sympathetic department—for he was most kind-hearted despite an overbearing temper which could transform him—and a charitable department. By all means let her do her good in *his* way—in one street, at stated times, never overtiring herself (what was the carriage there for ?) and with every precaution against infection : this much, surely, she owed to her home. His purse was at her disposal for charity in a cage. He was not to blame for his limitations, and never did she blame him. Rather she was glad and grateful.

He did not know that, in a subdued sense, he was a sort of juggernaut's car. He would have been horrified if anyone had told him so. His habits had been so confirmed by his career that he could not help it. And though she was instinctively submissive, she was never wholly so. When she thought him misguided, never did she argue with him. She brought her influence to bear by the music of her voice and actions. For she had a voice soft and low—" an excellent thing in woman," especially when loud contradictions counter her.

I do not think that she fully realised, through many vicissitudes which need not be detailed, how near he was to her heart, despite every drawback, till he was gone. She seemed lost without him, in a maze without an exit. Much as her children strove to help her, she never recovered confidence or indeed health. He had done everything. And his fine courage when he knew that he was stricken down, his unwonted calmness, his habitual resource, his perseverance so long as he could walk or speak or breathe in all the routine of existence, his efforts to spare her anxiety and yet to impress his will for the future's sake, were indeed marvels. Though in wearing pain, he never gave in. He set everything in perfect order. Only for three days at the very close was he in bed, only for one day, the last, would he have a nurse.

A scorching sorrow withered that tender flower now that the stern, protecting shadow had fled. She found comfort in her unfaltering faith, in her home for which she worked—sitting up late in the night to add up the accounts as *he* would have done—and in her beloved Beethoven throughout whose

fathomless melodies, as she often told me, she could distinguish not only triumphant sorrow, but the notes of every bird that hails the spring. From time to time her old gentle mirth would flicker, like winter sunshine, over the scene. I can hear her now saying of some *contretemps*, as she used to, " How rich ! " She bore up bravely and most lovingly. Never was the light of love in her eyes, the light that answered love, more lovely. She pined away and died. But the halo of her dear presence is undying. She crowned holiness with joy and garlanded goodness with roses.

IV.—FOUR "PHILANTHROPISTS"

(1) Paulina Pry

Let me present to your notice as the first philanthropist *à la mode* Miss Paulina Pry, an elderly maid with interfering instincts. She was born meddlesome, but no scope for her talent worth talking about ever arose before the War. Till then she had only played a third fiddle in the village orchestra of local humanitarianism. She was an understrapper at the Zenana Mission bazaars, the sewing (but not reaping) classes, the missionary societies for the propagation of clergymen in foreign parts. But even then she owned a nose for scandal almost as keen as that of the New Forest dogs for truffles.

She loved being shocked. She was always being horribly shocked at the rector's ritualism, or the flightiness of servant girls, or the butcher's drunkenness. The wretch loitered in alehouses while his much-bearing wife slaved at the business. His pretexts were ingenious. He had actually alleged a consuming desire for confirmation, that ceremony having been omitted in his upbringing. And he had bamboozled the silly old squire into believing that he must go away for a time for the purpose to Bolchester. Confirmed, forsooth! He came back fuddled with beer; if you like, a confirmed drunkard. And, speaking of anything so necessary to salvation, how profane the village was now growing! She was visiting old Mrs. Blunderbuss the other day and inquiring how her sons were doing. How was John? "Oh, John, mum, be a soldier now, and be doin' well, but the asthmasphere of the barracks don't make 'im complete." And George, how was George?—"Oh, Garge, thank ye kindly, Garge *'e* be up to anything. Garge is going to be confirmed by the Bishop of Bolchester, *'e* is!" What a dreadful instance of pagan irreverence!

And then, worst of all, there was the squire's third wife.

Had you heard—did you ever! She would judge no one, but a friend who knew had told her that this young Jezebel of a creature was not a widow as the squire had given out, but that unspeakable thing, a woman with a past. Miss Pry, thank Heaven, had no past and not much, so far, of a present. Nor was she as yet aware that a future lay before her. But there are limits even to the charity that beareth all things. This third Lady Wyoming, with her Frenchified airs and disgraces, had elongated the spinster's gimlet nose till the very spectacles were performing winter sports upon it. *He had met her at Monte Carlo.* That name in itself conjured up visions of vice—of Babylon and the Scarlet Woman.

If this outcast should have the audacity to call on her, she would never return the visit: you could not touch pitch without being defiled. And yet, poor woman, who knew what a tract or a word in season might not effect? Had the village yet heard of the change in the name of one of their hunters? The label over the stable-stall which used to be " Grizzle " had been painted out and " Lady Hamilton " had now been substituted. Lady Hamilton, any portrait of whom in any decent household ought to be turned with its face to the wall. Lady Hamilton indeed!

Well, the War burst out on us, and England shook herself out of torpor and braced all her sinews for the gigantic struggle. Every hamlet bustled with manifold, if sometimes misdirected, zeal. Through the sheer law of the survival of the unfittest, she was forced to stifle antipathy and to approach the porch, and the pitch, of the great house. She was told off to the task of packing up parcels for prisoners. But Nature, so bountiful to her in curiosity, had not lavished speed or neatness on her fingers. It galled her to see the Scarlet Woman so superior to her (and condescending) in these faculties. And so she soon got herself transferred to the District Board of the Red Cross, which sounded ever so much better.

Here the outlook was far wider. There was no petty discrimination about its regulations. The rector's wife held aloof, but the doctor's widow came into action. Of course there were drawbacks. There was that horrid problem—a prō-blem, she pronounced it—of the Belgian refugees—of the unmarried wife with children, too often an eyesore to patriots and a stumbling-block for conscience. Had not Lady Hamilton once been such an unmarried wife? The case was terrible to contemplate.

Her principles forbade any compromise with Satan. And yet, unexpectedly, there developed within her a latent, an unfamiliar spinweb of casuistry. She did not know it, but there it was. At a special meeting of this august body she gave it as her settled conviction that in such dilemmas hospitality could only be conceded to those women who were, in fact, as one might say, illegitimate great-grandmothers. The taint would then recede into the dim distance. This proposition of hers, however, was promptly turned down by the village nurse, among others, and once more Paulina had rendered herself so impossible that, under the show of a deference to her mature judgment, she was promptly transferred to the county branch at Bolchester, over which the dear bishopess presided.

The local hospital thus became her sacred trust. How superior she felt herself !—how like Joan of Arc, on this bigger stage ! She was concerned with the training of V.A.D.s for the wounded of both Services. But here again her incapacities caused trouble. She could not disguise her dogma that a war-nurse should be a missionary, while she incensed the wounded by a strict inquisition into the causes of their ailments. She bombarded them with morality, and was voted " a rum old bean." Everyone was set by the ears—even the bishop, whom she irritated by perpetually quoting " Compel them to come in."

But observe how all this time Providence was working for her evolution. Even her sourest grapes were to form the foundation of a vintage wine, and the widespread repugnance that she engendered to prove the lever of her rise. To get rid of her, the bishop wrote a letter of recommendation to the headquarters of the Red Cross in London. It was a proud day for Paulina when, beaming with smug self-satisfaction and the grant of an adequate allowance, she established herself in a hostel where tomatoes were the chief luxury. She was thus brought into even wider contact with the disabled, and, when they returned to the scene of action, was prolific in constant and almost amorous correspondence. It was no good. They had seen and known her. That was enough. Headquarters, teeming with the titles which always intoxicated her, was at last driven to devise some tactful exit.

So in 1917 she migrated quite cheerfully, and indeed grandiosely, to a post on the committee of the Ministry of Reconstruction—a foundling of Mr. Lloyd George presumably

picked up in a bundle for the apotheosis of posterity. Here at last she swam in her element. Her whole business was to meddle with the business of others. She was concerned with the training of women, being herself absolutely untrained, and of " juveniles," who shuddered at her footstep. She gave thanks that in her miraculous pilgrim's progress from the penitential stool to the interviewer's confessional, she was at length in sight of Beulah.

Lucina save the mark, she was now acknowledged as an expert on the hygiene of maternity. And her theory—evolved in the Tube—that the Child (as she termed it) was to be the eventual educator of the Parent was an idea of infinite appeal to the " root-ground " of Democracy. Such an inspiration only comes once in a lifetime even to the least gifted, while its piquant vagueness was a godsend to the Ministry for Diverting Attention from the War. At last she was *persona grata*, and when she added to her repertoire the systematic equipment of " fallen women " as munition-workers, her field of intrusion received its final manure.

But, alas ! even that particular pasture was to be excluded. She quarrelled with the committee about " Birth-Control," so manifestly opposed to the teaching of the Scriptures and the practice both of the clergy and the labouring classes. No worldly advantage would seduce her from the higher allegiance, and so, to the great relief of her office, and by a celestial suggestion (also generated in the Tube) that she had been sent into the world to champion " Woman," she contrived her removal to the International Labour Office—a rough prologue to the League of Nations. Since, however, neither learning nor logic played any part in that Tower of Babel's composition, and since, moreover, " Woman " had little in common with women, there indeed she prospered.

She had enjoyed few opportunities for seeing the Continent, but in this department it became often her absolute duty to travel abroad at the public expense. How she revelled in this fresh vent for her intermeddling eloquence ! She was chosen —chosen, mind you—as the London delegate for the great International Women's Conference at Lugano, and, ecstasy on ecstasy, " There was neither speech or language, but her voice was heard." Her prayers had been answered. Her wilderness had blossomed like the rose, and when she returned a triumphant Dame and " C.B.E.," when she was photographed

and invited to an official reception, she turned her back, according to her solemn word, on the meretricious Lady Wyoming. And this is the true history and modern mystery of Paulina Pry, spinster and mischief-maker, who will be returned to Parliament at the next election.

(2) Mr. Mark Hall

A Bad Samaritan

Mr. Mark Hall is "a general merchant," and for him philanthropy is a business. In a good year he gives largely and indiscriminately to every recorded fund. It is a fire-insurance. In a bad year—when the profits do not exceed forty per cent—he scales down his munificence all along the line, and will even reduce commitments incurred in advance if he finds that commerce fails to respond. This pains him to the quick, but we must all suffer if we are to be good, and many martyrs die to save the world. His virtue is beyond suspicion, and he would best be described by one of the eighteenth century epitaphs on a tablet displaying a weeping widow and five agonised children, with a palm tree and a broken-hearted Britannia in the background. Even in these latter days he had been known to beg his guests over the port to excuse the invariable call to family prayers—thereby giving extra trouble to the servants, and some inconvenience to his friends. But the rite has become a habit, and he cannot forego outward observance.

In politics, as in practice, he is Liberal, though for the moment he has come to doubt what that amphibious designation means, or whether in the long run something which only seems to exist in discordant sections will really benefit trade. Still, he supports the party funds because charity at all costs must begin at home, though he would disdain to let her stay there. He lets her gad in every guise and in every direction —all "welfare" movements in foreign climes; collections for erecting the statue of anybody anywhere, the purchase of large estates, once so beneficial to agricultural industry, for the recreation of "the masses," reredoses for cathedrals, prizes for peace-essays—everything, in fact, that is sufficiently advertised.

He is never anonymous in any transaction. The recording angel is always hovering around him. In the village church

near his country " seat," on important collection-days, and in the most prominent pew, he it is who might have been seen genially beating time during the Benedictus and waving an extended forefinger through which peered the five-pound note for which the impatient plate was waiting.

And in town, he it is who mostly pays for and always presents what may be styled the diamond inkstand in token of gratitude for twenty-five years of faithful service by nobody in particular. Self-complacent like Jack Horner, he sits in his corner and says " What a good boy am I." If he were to cease to give, he would cease to live—the best proof of which is that he has lately been offered, quite spontaneously, of course, a peerage, which, with coy reluctance, he has accepted. Like Jack Horner again, he has pulled out a plum. His crest is a ladder rampant, and his motto: " A pound in time saves nine." So it does.

(3) Mr. Godwin Semple

He affords a striking contrast to the preceding specimen. The architecture of Mr. Mark Hall's philanthropy inclines to the Corinthian order, Mr. Godwin Semple's to the Doric. He is severe even in his brotherly love, and retails his philanthropic piece-goods with a yard-measure. This yard-measure, however, is by no means concrete. It is an abstract yard-measure conforming to canons that might exist if only they could fit facts. He rules out human nature and replaces it with doctrinaire postulates and inversions. He dwells in a garden city which is in no respect a city, and in rare respects a garden. The unequal patches behind the simple-life houses too often grow bizarre garments which indicate from which quarter the wind is blowing. The simple-life tenements themselves mostly air a flimsy affectation of grievance. And the simple life means, in the main, incessant bickerings, and a two-seater that enables the " co-partner "—if he is not an owner—to escape from them.

Though Semple lives on the income of inherited capital, he has become an active, or rather a perambulating, Socialist. He has " sacrificed " his profession to perpetual lecture-tours on every conceivable subject. Their principal aim is to persuade the crowd that all should be masters, and that none should serve. " Ich dien " is, therefore, an exploded motto. This is

a very comfortable doctrine if it, or its recipients, would only work or "wash," whereas unfortunately a sense of duty impels them to do neither. The process of his propaganda is politely termed "personal service," though, in truth, it is profoundly impersonal.

Semple loves his fellow-creatures so much that he is bent on boring them. He is never particular, but always universal, with the result that whenever he steps on to the platform all human interest evaporates through the door. From his attitude you might imagine that he was so full of personal services that there was no room for personal ambition. Not a bit of it, though he would blush so to baptize it in the portable font of his idealism which he carries with him wherever he goes. In the "sweet sessions" of silent thought he would call this ambition of his a yearning for international justice.

If he arrived there was to be no more strife except the mildest strikes for three months in the year; no more tyranny save that of "organized" labour unless "solidarity" were maintained; no more grinding proprietorships. The mediæval guilds, but without their rigour or vigour, were his models at home, and Noah's Ark—bereft of the deluge—his paragon abroad. Of course he was "anti-militarist" and desired to whittle down the national services (our national insurance) to a minimum. Seldom, however, did he deprecate the maintenance of a huge standing army by Soviet-Russia, or protest against the Bolshevist plots for undoing Great Britain, or its barbarities in their furtherance. Never did he point out that our Army and Navy were great and beneficial sources of employment. But always he desired that the sums "saved" by their reduction should be devoted to doles, individual, municipal, commercial, or international.

Everybody was to agree about everything, and the neo-Catholic movement was to bless a very new Council of Nicea. The skeleton-angel of an anatomized peace, softly blowing its own trumpet, was to brood over a once convulsed world, olive branches were to flourish in the chilliest climates, nations were to dissolve into United States, lawyers were to become gratefully unpaid mediators, doctors infallible faith-healers, and if butchers were tolerated, they were to be requited on the barter system by boots. And the "State" was through some supernatural purse to defray all these extravagances. In fact, he was Shelley without his poetic etherealisms or complexities, Robert

Owen without his practical experience, and Bernard Shaw without his metallic wit or concealed sting. The latter's dialogues, by the by, were constantly performed by a woe-begone cast in the Garden-Suburb's " Hall of Recreation."

Again and again did our academic friend stand for Parliament, on family subsidies, but always he failed to sit. Nor in any of his candidatures did he ever condescend to any tiresome details except some carefully-picked statistics. The first time—before his conversion—he trod the platform as a Coalition Liberal. Landlords were then the burden of his indignation, and dukes—whom he had never met—came in for such a dressing that they recovered from it next morning. His next attempt, poor fellow, was, as a Liberal, on the housing question, but he could not convince the electorate that, with the trade-union-clutch on the building trade, houses could grow up by thousands in an Arabian Night without ruining the country ; nor could he guarantee that their tenants would be those for whom they were designed. In his latter efforts the sentimental vein, which is not his forte, has been unusually prominent, but it has only issued in heart-rending bathos. Indeed, one ironical interrupter sang out amid " loud laughter " : " Don't put my father's picsher up for sile."

It is all very disheartening, for he is really quite a good fellow, who would have made a capital chartered accountant if he had not been pushed by group-flattery into over-estimating alike his own powers and the credulity of others. He will never surrender his " mission," for his narrow sincerity is self-complacent and humourlessly self-accepting. He cannot distinguish dullness from earnestness, and the prig-world will always applaud him. He sometimes reminds me, in a wholly different sphere, of the minor virtuoso who collects objects inherently valueless—the painted lids of old potted-meat boxes and the like. After the same manner our solemn acquaintance collects threadbare shibboleths, and is proud of them. There are times when he puts them up to a sort of moral auction, but his reserves are so high that, even in these days of bidding for bidding's sake, they are mostly bought in.

I had meant to describe another " philanthropic "character, Mr. Hardcastle Naylor, who never gives without knocking you down, or succours distress without imposing an obligation. But I will desist out of a well-founded fear of over-harping on one string. Let me pass on to a much more lovable type—the

man who means so well to all mankind and remains so cheerily undeceived by finding it out. He is a spiritual Don Quixote.

(4) Mr. St. George Rindlesham

If the best intentions and a winning sympathy could succeed in bettering the world without the checks of judgment and insight, St. George Rindlesham would indeed prove a deliverer. Like his patron saint, he spends his life in rescuing misery from dragons. Well-to-do, fond of sport and travel, he disdains to loiter through life or pass by on the other side of the desert where the robbed sufferer lies bleeding. If the victim turns out after all to be a victimizer, that is no reason why he should feel discouraged in his round of casual well-doing.

His protégés have been countless, for he protects everyone but himself. There was the board-school genius whom his master pronounced a Raphael. He saw the mediocre drawings, consulted a great artist, and sent the lad to study abroad—which ruined both his career and his health. He now hawks about his masterpieces from door to door.

Then there was his young friend whom he had encountered while fighting in France as a Territorial. By profession an agent, he was badly wounded and could not at once resume his calling, though immediately he married. Straightway Rindlesham took the young couple to live with him in Luxmore Square. They had the run of everything for a year, and, if it may so be phrased, they ran like anything—ran through everything, till both they and their benefactor grew breathless. The man who was so gentle when wounded was rough and insatiable when well, and his girl-wife turned out to be a smiling harpy. Even when the catastrophe came, when parting was such sweet sorrow, dear Rindlesham would only see the best in them. One must make allowances—and indeed he had bestowed large allowances on them both. It was too bad of them, no doubt, but how would *you* have behaved under the circumstances? "There, but for the grace of God, goes John Bunyan." And gratitude! Who expects it, or deserves it?

Again, there was that Tommy in hospital who wrote to him saying that he had seen his cousin when he died at Loos. Rindlesham made no inquiries, but visited him without delay, and believed his story. He saw him constantly, brought

him fruit and flowers, and, directly he was convalescent, gave him the wherewithal for a month at the seaside. The wonted awakening followed. A soldier-relative wrote that he had just been sitting on a court-martial where this very wretch had been sentenced for gross misbehaviour. He had given Rindlesham's name, and repeated the story of his being present at the death of Rindlesham's cousin.

It was all an infernal lie. The impostor had never even been in the same regiment as Rindlesham's cousin, and, as for having gone to the seaside on his benefactor's bounty, you might tell that to the marines. He had spent the money in riotous living. Rindlesham owned with sorrow what a bad case it was, but it was his own fault. He should have been more circumspect.

Then there was that curious episode of the literary crossing-sweeper. Rindlesham had lit on him in Soho, pretending to sweep a crossing, but for the moment seated on a camp-stool, deeply immersed in Milton's " Paradise Lost." He entered into conversation with this interesting vagrant, who quoted Elizabethan authors, lodged in a doss-house and yet retained his passion for the poets. Rindlesham, of course, brought him books, helped him, and one very rainy afternoon asked him if he would care to enter his service as a manservant, for the place was vacant. Its duties were light, he was out most of the day, and the accidental crossing-sweeper should have the run of his library. This offer was accepted forthwith, and for a time all went fairly well. The man valeted Rindlesham according to instructions, and, except for a certain restlessness —he was always walking up and down—presented a good appearance.

One night, however, when the master returned from a dinner-party, he found all his towels grimed with filth, and on going down to his study beheld his pattern domestic drowsing in the armchair near a roaring fire over a novel which had dropped from his hands into a big pot of beer. Rindlesham could not help laughing at the sight, and, I verily believe, would in the end have forgiven him, but for what the towsly truant said when aroused from his torpor. " Look here, sir," he exclaimed with an immaculate accent, " you must admit that I never asked to come here any more than into this beastly world. I thank you for your kindness, but I wonder that you could not see that no fixed occupation would ever suit me,

that I prefer to be a vagabond—a respectable vagabond—and that I can't be anything else. I beg you, sir, not to think of keeping me here. It will make a villain of me. I ask pardon for washing in your bedroom and drinking by your fireside, but, in the name of all that is natural, give me my freedom back again. I hate washing : let me keep dirty. Let me return to my crossing and my doss-house and my own sloppy ways. I daresay that Milton wasn't too clean. *Don't* pardon me, sir ; don't be good to me any more. Let me go." The man was right.

I could repeat many more similar adventures—of the reclaimed convicts, the salvage of his prison visitations, who could not resist the call of their blood, though for a short time they might take shelter under the angel's wing—and in particular of two companions who, by a queer coincidence, were named Odam and Demmit. I could tell you of the feckless land-girl whom he set up in a little farm which, save for unexampled accidents, must have prospered. She, of course, differed from most of her sisterhood who have founded a new and admirable order that has come to stay : but Rindlesham always lit on the exceptions. I could tell you of the boy guide who turned out to be a milksop revolutionist, of the elderly female whom he encouraged to play the harp, though she recalled that Limerick of

> There was an old lady of Sheen
> Whose musical ear was not keen.
> She said : " It *is* odd
> That I cannot tell ' God
> Save the Weasel ' from ' Pop goes the Queen.' "

And of numbers who relinquished each post which he found for them on the plea of ill-health. I could tell you about charitable ladies of mature years on unpunctual committees, who fell in love with Rindlesham, though he was never aware of it. But what avails it to cut a short story long ?

This at least may be said. Though Rindlesham's voyages of beneficence have been mostly voyages in the air, he has at least delivered his own soul.

> 'Tis better to have loved and lost,
> Than never to have loved at all.

PART II

SPIRITS OF THE AGE

I.—TO THE NEW YOU

If you and I were breathing
" When all the world was young,"
And human nature teething,
And little sung or done,
I fancy fire and fodder
Would prove our chief concern—
Odd e'en for you, but odder
To see me mar my turn.

Had you and I been living
When Pericles was there,
And proud Aspasia giving
Her law to souls who dare,
You would be frankly daring,
While I might " listen in "
And find them overbearing,
And their disputes a din.

If I and you together
Had drawn aspiring breath
In the tremendous weather
Of great Elizabeth,
You'd fain be buccaneering
With Raleigh over seas,
While I, entranced, sat hearing
The swell of Shakespeare's breeze.

Had you and I abounded
When Charles the doomed was here,
You would have been a Roundhead
And I a Cavalier.
For always gay half-action
And grace enchanted me,
Howe'er you strove for faction,
Or dreamed the fallen free.

Had you and I attended
The Court of poor Queen Anne,
You would have shone, befriended
By Marlborough and his clan :
While I—no self-ovation
It bodes, nor friendship's rift—
Preferred the constellation
Of Bolingbroke and Swift.

Had both of us partaken
Of Addison's thin meal,
I should have you forsaken
And rushed to Dickie Steele ;
And thence to Jacob Tonson,
In hope young Pope to meet—
Ere noble Samuel Johnson
With Savage roamed the street.

To-day we stroll together
In this vainglorious age,
And I have lost my tether
And spent my heritage.
You still remain a-tingle
For all that sails the air,
While I dash off this jingle
On this Victorian chair.

What boots the phantom fashion
Of evanescent days ?
The faith of us, the passion
Abide, and go their ways.
Farewell : let each endeavour
To reach his kindred star,
Where God fulfils for ever
All Spirits near or far.

II.—THE NEW POET

ONCE upon a time people might not know what great poetry was, but they did know what poetry meant to *them*. Always, of course, there were new poets, and, of course, always small cliques of affected bards, like the Della Cruscans, who coruscated in coteries and were soon quenched. But a poet good or bad in preceding ages corresponded, in one way or another, to the needs of his age. He rendered in melodious and often perfect expression what its feeling, its romance, its passion, and thought demanded. Were he perchance one of the great poets he would rise immeasurably above and beyond his environment, but still he voiced or symbolized his generation! This has all changed, and the real reason, I venture to fear, is because the mass now do not really seem to want or require poetry. And therefore, save in rare instances, poetry they do not get, or even verse.

This phase, let us hope, is merely a transition. At present what was once the sparkling water of Helicon has often to be artificially manufactured for an exotic few without any appeal to the thirsting million. It is, with some fine exceptions, a cult, not a faith. Take Miss Carthage Calmady, who is the momentary high priestess of what is ironically termed the Movement. She dictates the total absence of music or meaning and is inconsequently hailed by the Corybantes of Chelsea. Take the following, which is of her school—without scansion, rhythm, import or impact:

> Beautiful Boxes!
> What shall we do with them?
> Nothing at all.

What *are* these beautiful boxes? Are they boxes of unanswered letters or unpaid bills? Are they theatre-boxes or Christmas-boxes? Are they, by self-confession, fit for nothing

but the waste-paper basket, which is itself a paulo-post-futurist "poem"? And then pass on to the new-tragic note, as thus —and it has actually been published :

My Father and my Mother stood on the door-step.
My Father killed my Mother.

This is a crude, bald statement of a supposed crime, and the newspapers could "stunt" such a situation much more poignantly, as thus :

The Deadham Mystery.
Who Murdered Mrs. Margarine ?
When She Left Home She Was Wearing A Fawn Coat.
Suspicion Lights On The Husband.
Was He Her Husband ?
Amazing Allegations Of The Milliner.

Now, I maintain that the journalistic heading is just as much poetry as the preceding telegraphic and fatuous announcement. Both are devoid alike of atmosphere or feeling, but the latter does impart excitement. Nay, more. In my preface I respectfully mentioned an old guide-book : "The English Tourist in Italy : a Practical and Easy Method of Speaking and Learning Italian," by Professor N. G. Genzardi, published nigh on fifty years ago. The Professor, with vivid acumen, seems to have anticipated the fame of Miss Carthage Calmady and her fellowship of either or no sex. Allow me to exhibit some random specimens :

We are thirsty, give us something to drink.
We are not thirsty, we are hungry.
We are neither thirsty nor hungry.
We are sleepy.

How forcible sound these gradations ! How fine the surprising climax ! Here the intuitive prophet seems to have foreseen the probable effect of the new sham Ossianic style both on the poet and the public. Again :

I have not had any letter,
But one has spoken to me of it.
Of what ?
Of the marriage of my sister with the humpback,
The son of our advocate.

What an epitome of pity and fear and scorn ! And how tersely the " Of What ? " sums up the significance of the new Muse ! And, further, if we crave the new idyl with all its colour :

> I like the green of the mountains,
> The meadows, the valleys.
> *But not in my gloves.*

What a triumph crowns the close ! Yet it corresponds to an incredible fact, for years ago in an " oddment " sale I myself have admired a glove's verdure, as " reduced " in value as the purchaser was in purse, or, in power, the New Verse. And here is another snatch in the allegorical vein which too seldom mystifies the newest mode :

> To whom have you given the sword of the hero ?
> To the Hermit.
> And I have also given the cross of the Hermit
> To the Hero.
> Who is he ?
> He is an Englishman.

Yes, " in spite of all temptations." And, finally, when the New Pegasus kicks, fly-bitten, there is this : I preserve the spelling and take the lesson to heart :

> You can never endure anything.
> Moschitoes are the only thing that you can endure.
> I, on the contrary, cannot endure them. . . .
> Look at the Man on the roof of that House.

I *am* looking. That man is a true poet, may we say Mr. Masefield, and he is keenly contrasted with the " moschitoes " —" the only thing that you can endure."

It is hard to trace the precise mainsprings of Miss Calmady—whether she and her co-conspirators have struck out their contorted lines from repeated failures to gain the public ear, or whether they are perverted fanatics. Do they really believe in the gibberish which they enounce ? Who shall say ? They enounce it so often and with such self-applause in the small circles where they figure that they may—such is the lure of use—have grown to think that the Pierian spring has been improved by a flat aeration, and that the neurotic Muses have rightly dethroned Apollo.

Beauty is at a discount. Be amorphous and you are

" boomed." Express something ugly uglily and you are a new poet or poetess. Ugliness is your afflatus. Indeed, occasionally, the Castalian water is polluted with mud indescribable. What Miss Calmady's *provenance* is I know not. It may be one of disappointed vanity, or of platitude posing as revelation, or of fashion running after vulgarity and overtaking it, or of a simpleton's simplicity. At any rate, it is not wholly her fault, for she is made by her audience, who cry " Eureka " whenever she is abnormally absurd, and turn her aberrations into discoveries.

The cult of Miss Calmady, retail though it be, appears to be protuberant. It has the vent of societies and a magazine. It has listening devotees. It may be no good breaking a moth upon a wheel, but of this I feel sure. One day, if the flicker aspiring to be a flame extends too far, Æschylus and Shakespeare will take their revenge. Miss Calmady and her crew will be haunted by the Furies, and Apollo will strike them dumb for their presumption. Nor will they ever become mythological by being converted into a laurel-tree, or any object of nature. For Nature abhors a vacuum.

III.—THE NEW ARTIST

Mr. Goliath Scrumb is an apostle of the New Art. It is new because it is so free and easy, but it moves uneasily in its freedom. It has been proved to be a reversion to barbarism—to the hieroglyphics of cave-dwellers, the scrawls of childhood, and the monstrosities perpetrated by the insane. Nevertheless, Mr. Scrumb is on firmer ground than Miss Calmady. He can urge plausible reasons for his lapses. He is a Titan rebelling against pretty-prettiness, and, above all, he is a champion of the New Symbolism. What at his best he really intends is to regard Art as mere decoration, as a pattern. What at his worst his deformities really are must be seen to be defined.

If he shows you a woman, you cannot recognize her as such; she is an unfinished and unsightly blotch. Her eyes are apertures awry, her nose is a wisp of hay, her mouth is a wriggling rhomboid, her figure is without form and void, her complexion is that of a bull'seye. If he gives you a landscape, it is a chaotic landslide; a house—it is a dyed Mahjong cube; a sky—it seems a welter of inverted insects; a sun—it is a toasted bun with black bulging currants; a moon—it resembles an anæmic tadpole that has just expired; a tree—it is an upside-down and tattered umbrella; a sea—it is a paralysed codfish; a river—it is a degenerate skein of wool; a child—it is an unstable vaccination mark.

Nothing is like anything, and everything is uncommonly like nothing. A friend of mine—herself an artist—went some time ago to one of the Newest Art Exhibitions, resolving to guess the subjects of the framed canvases without a catalogue. She stood long and searchingly before one of them, and at length decided that it must refer to two aeroplanes colliding in the clouds. What was her amazement to find on consulting the handbook that its theme was "Madonna and Child"! And this is Symbolism!

I once took Mr. Scrumb almost as seriously as he takes himself, and ventured to reason with him. I hinted that Art is only symbolic in the sense that it omits something which it recalls. It is the ocular appeal to association—what smell is to the nose. Its symbolism is not to be confused with the hieroglyphics of the alphabet, or with that of Whistler's butterfly signature. For what *is* a symbol? It is the part which suggests the whole, not a vague, distorted whole which at utmost only suggests an isolated part. The measles may be a symbol of sickness, but health can never be symbolized by the measles.

To this imperfect explanation he rejoined with a superior shake of the head. "I had forgotten," he said, "that to appreciate the beauty of the New Art's expressiveness I must first learn its langauge." This amazed me and recalled to my mind Professor Genzardi's ciceroneship already quoted in the preceding sketch. Does true Art require interpretation; is it not itself an interpreter? Surely it appeals at once to everyone, though in differing degrees. It needs no guide-book. It goes straight to the heart and mind, and in that regard is distinct from any mere map or photograph. Moreover, grace of some sort is an essential, for, in its widest sense, grace means harmony which is the soul of Art. Through grace—the grace of light, shadow, and an arrested moment—Pieter de Hooghe makes the homeliest figures Art; in a word, he makes Dame Nature an artist.

Mr. Scrumb wholly disagreed. "Look here," he said, "Art is based on mathematics. Euclid was an artist. You will grant that every painter or draughtsman must found himself on certain geometrical relations. He takes up his brush or pencil. The point 'A,' let us call it, must be portrayed at a fixed distance from point 'B,' and so forth." "Yes," I interposed, "there must be the curve of beauty on which Da Vinci, you will remember, indited an epoch-making treatise —and then there is perspective." "Leonardo and perspective be damned!" he resumed; "you must concede what I said about the points 'A' and 'B.' Well, then, the artist is wholly guided by this, and he does not care a rap, brush in hand, what his subject is, whether a Madonna or Frith's Derby Day—don't you *see?*" "You mean," I rudely interjected, "that Art is design without designation and technique without temperament; that its theme is a random accident?"

" Certainly ; what does the particular pattern matter ? You can mix something Chinese, Japanese, Polynesian, British, French, Persian, Græco-Roman together, anyhow, and there you are, of course." " Ah ! " I could not help sighing. " Art, then, according to the New Art, is an æsthetic League of Nations."

He brushed my conclusion away, and proceeded to his pet paradox, that the New Art is only an evolution from the old, and in no way its contradiction ; that Titian was trying to do what the New Art is achieving. Moreover, that after every revolutionary period there was always a relapse into Bourgeoise sentimentality—a theory which he illustrated by errors palpable, one would have supposed, to any tyro. But Titian—his " Love Sacred and Profane," with its real symbolism of ideals Christian and pagan—what, in the name of eternity, has *he* to do with the wriggling rhomboid, the Mahjong cube, the inverted insects, the landslide, the anæmic tadpole, the toasted bun, the topsy-turvy umbrella, the paralysed codfish, the rickety vaccination marks ? Titian, with his noble intensity and his glowing backgrounds. Titian, who sublimes pleasure and enhances exaltation !

Good heavens ! are we standing on whatever head we may have to think with, or on whatever heels we have wherewith to run away ? Has not the New Art far closer affinities to absinthe and affectation than to Titian and his immortal brotherhood ? And then we spoke of El Greco, the eye-diseased, who, after long, sane centuries, has come to fascinate these crazed *illuminati*.

Michelangelo defend us ! Survey some of their grandest performances purporting to " decorate " a public building, and extending, perhaps, to what might well be termed thirty Cubist feet. The force of anti-Nature can no further go. They leave you in much the same condition as that in which a bad hurricane leaves a bad sailor. They deprive you of any energy save a longing to make your exit and find, if possible, some snug asylum for sense. Their cant about " Symbolism " robs you of everything and gives you nothing in return, though, of course, this physical result must be because you have not learned their Esperanto, which even the initiated seem powerless to translate. And they glory in their shame and dare to extort an æsthetic credit by mental bankruptcy. They stand in the same relation to Arts and Crafts as the Bolsheviks do to economics or

idealism. If they were right their works would prove that Art had made no progress for some ten thousand years, chiming as they do with the caveman's efforts, and yet claiming that Praxiteles was barbaric and Raphael a ninny.

Not so very long ago a painter of name and fame sent for a joke under a *nom-de-guerre* several contributions to one of the Newest Art exhibitions. So entirely and easily had he caught the trick of the trade that he deceived the very elect. And with many of these virtuosos a trade it is. They sell deformities to patrons with a palate for the unsavoury or the curious. And thus an artificial market is created, not by demand but by disease. What will be Posterity's verdict? To take merely the test of prices, Rembrandt and Titian have always fetched great sums in proportion to the period of sale. Will these usurpers do the same?

But let us accept Mr. Goliath Scrumb with a grain of salt. He is a clever fellow who was quite a tolerable artist till he took to caravanning with the New Art's fiddle-faddle and sincerely persuaded himself that its counsels of imperfection formed Art's ultimate goal. Very likely by now he has at last found his brethren out. But it is too late. He dares not recede from the rancid moment when he became the Guild's appointed and anointed incense-bearer. He would like, I fancy, to have his tongue in his cheek while he dignifies the creed as inspiration —as the sole surviving protest against mechanical photography. Yes, I almost thought that I could detect a sad twinkle in his eye as he extolled Dubbs and Galifrin and Toshky, those unknown gods, and frequents the exhibitions which lend a currency to their clipped coins. For Scrumb is absolutely uncommercial himself. He gets nothing out of it. He has taken to the road out of sheer caprice, and eschews all highways to market towns.

By nature he is domestic in the extreme, and the muffins on his cosy tea-table seem to deride the handwriting on his walls. There is nothing at all impassioned about him, rather there is a sort of good-natured indifference. And the very next time that one of his idols exhibits a "Portrait of the Universe," which he is bound to praise, I should like to be Asmodeus peering through his roof-tree when he is alone with himself. Perhaps he will be repeating over his comforting tumbler of Auld Lang Syne those five words through which Shakespeare has immortalized grief—"Here I and sorrow sit."

IV.—NEW CHILDREN

(1) The New Child

Where is it ? I often read about this infant phenomenon, but cannot behold it. What I do perceive is that with enlarged openings the child is in the main more a child than ever. Formerly it was a chattel : now, for good or ill, it is the child, irrepressible if sometimes wizened. What for centuries was latent but imprisoned is lately manifest and voluble. Still, however, there are certain instinctive utterances of childhood that must have been common to all ages, as when, for example, a little boy who had hurt his finger—promptly bandaged by a plain though kindly visitor—exclaimed to his mother : " Oh, mummie, I take an *un*fancy to she."

But in the sense that the child of the Plantagenets, the Tudors, the Stuarts, and still more of the Georges, was not a child at all, their successor *is* new and singularly varied. The child plays most of its ancient games (marbles, I think, excepted)—indulges in dolls' weddings and the like—but it plays new games also in mild mimicry of the life around it. The new child is the old child with supplements and an appendix, but, as a rule, without an index. At all times and in all places children (like politicians) still play " Let us *pertend*," and they always " pertend " to be grown up, just as, on the other hand, the prevalent *renouvellement de la jeunesse* by their elders, which turns grandmama and grandpapa into a giddy girl and boy, is the " pertending " to be young.

The children, however, are wider in their circle of mimicry. They pretend to be every one around them, including the prig. For the old type that Miss Edgeworth imaged still remains, from choice now instead of necessity. All will remember the little girl whose father had presented her with the birthday gift of a silk frock. " Oh ! " said this priglet, wearing her new

gewgaw for the first time, and airing her new learning, " Oh, mummie, and to *think* that all this comes from a little worm ! " To which the mother, with a sorry self-betrayal, replied , " Oh, darling, you must never speak like that of your father ! "

There is another little girl of a distinct and more civic type who delights in singing hymns of a Sunday evening. Not long ago she chose the familiar one of " All Things Bright and Beautiful," with the refrain of " The Lord God made them all." Unfortunately, by a congenital slip, the dear little thing sang, " The *Lord Mayor* made them all." She saw nothing incongruous in this profession of faith.

And *à propos,* another true story may be cited. It was again the small songstress on Sunday evening. Which hymn would she choose ? " Any but the dirty one, mummie ! " —" Dirty ! What *can* you mean, darling ? " " Oh, mummie, you *must* remember it—the one beginning with, " I never change." But, as a rule, it is the modern catchwords that the child repeats without understanding them. Not long ago another little girl was asked to show her dolls to a visitor. " This," she said, pointing to a dishevelled specimen, " *this* is my bad-lot doll." And once more as regards the child *à la mode,* a very naughty little girl persisted in smashing all her sister's dolls. Her mother, rebuking her, was met by the retort that it was not she but " Granpy " who had thus trespassed. Her mother, shocked by this transparent untruth, enjoined her to beg forgiveness in her evening prayer. But when the moment came, the little criminal's prayer was this : " O God, please forgive Granpy for all the evil that he has done. Amen."

But what are we to say of the schoolboy who was asked by his examiner to give instances of the various developments of prayer-book ritual during the age of Queen Elizabeth ? Part of his answer was the following : " Towards the end of her reign authorized virgins (*i.e.,* versions) were chained to the lecterns of parish churches for the use of the common Clergy." Or of the lad who, interrogated about parliamentary changes during the period of the Tudors, replied : " Queen Elizabeth was more than once petitioned by Parliament to marry. No one ever petitioned Henry the Eighth to marry again " ?

On rare occasions, therefore, the modern child can be vastly overknowing. To a certain little girl her old-fashioned father announced the arrival of a baby brother. Of course, papa gave the old explanation—Nana found it under a gooseberry bush.

But the child, undaunted, went on asking how she, her father and his father, had been found. The doctor had found them under a mulberry tree, or in a parsley bed, was always the embarrassed answer. Then the little girl asked if she might write to her schoolboy brother all about it. Certainly, of course, she might, and she did so. But unfortunately she left the letter open, and her father read it. It ran : " Dear George, I have won my bet, and you owe me a shilling. I told you that it would be a boy."

Everything is new to a child and nothing is old, only some children are born with business instincts. I suppose it was so even in the Middle Ages, when they were so suppressed that it was of no feudal use to express their desires. Recently a little girl was asked: " Which would you rather that Santa Claus should bring you, a doll or a doll's perambulator ? " To which she sharply answered : " Oh, grandmama, I would like Santa Claus to bring me the doll, and you, please, to give me the perambulator."

So far, you will notice, it is mostly the little girl, belonging, as she does, to the quicker and unfairer sex. The little boy, however at all times contrived to get the lion's share of occasion, was the more grown-up in will, if the less sharp-witted. In the fourteenth century, if he were not a serf or an apprentice, he might have been a page singing to his lute for the bored-to-death Châtelaine in her gloomy castle. In the seventeenth century he went a-hawking or adventuring while his little sister was being disposed of in lucrative marriage without ever so much as hearing of it from her rulers. In the eighteenth century the boy was early bound to some vocation or other—even of idleness—while the little maid was busy over conserves and cordials or stitching samplers at her tambour frame with " Jane Stacey, aged fourteen," under :

> If always I my duty do,
> And parents dear obey,
> I ne'er shall miss my whole life through
> To tread the happiest way.

But now, up to a point, things *have* changed. The girl is much more in evidence, the boy more. And, by consequence, if the girl be sometimes pert the exceptional boy may seem blasé. And yet withdraw these outside aspects, and watch

them alone together behind the scenes. The boy still rules. Physically or by assumed experience he remains the master, though often quite grave and solemn. The girl, for all her mental forwardness, easily succumbs. There are times when a schoolboy brother will say to a sister, who, during the holidays, unexpectedly quits him to pay a visit to a friend, " I thought I could *count* on you, but " (with cutting irony) " I am disappointed." Yet even then the sister, though she tosses her head, will burst into tears. To the boy all things are still possible, to the girl, for all her independence, principally the boy.

Moreover, now that girls are so often public schoolgirls, with every young-masculine pretension, it might be thought natural that the two sexes should play games together with equality. Not a bit of it—except sometimes in fun. The girl never loses the subconsciousness of inferiority in athletics and can be morbidly aggressive on that very account. " Male and female created He them." " As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be," despite all the giglamped highbrows and fortuitous vicissitudes in the world.

But in their united attitude towards parents, aunts, and uncles, they are at one, and here a marked change has ensued. The child is now a civilized child. Where it was subservient, it is polite, and it is daily more difficult to penetrate its affections. It is much less sentimental and much more reticent than of old. No doubt in most cases it loves its home, particularly when it has left it, but you never can tell. Perhaps it cannot always tell itself. Like so much else nowadays, it has become more public and less private. None the less, it makes up its mind sooner and is readier to profit by experience. The child used to be the father or mother of the man—a bud bound to develop into a blossom. It is now often the frank step-parent of its parents. And this is the New Child. Newfoundland was the old child. The New is America.

(2) Daughters in Council

Let me pass for one moment from childhood to youth in its relation to age. The subject has been worn threadbare, and I shall only touch on it by means of the subjoined true snapshot of a conversation between three girls who discussed their fathers as travelling companions. Youth can be cruel to Age.

Though girls are far less cruel to their elders than boys can be to each other; there is the touch of a future mother about every girl.

One day it may even perhaps be deemed advisable to found a Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Parents.

And now for our illustration.

First Daughter: We went such a lovely trip to Italy, but my father took me.

Second Daughter: Why, what does that matter? I often travel with *my* father. Poor old dear, he stares at people so in every railway-carriage that he makes one quite uncomfortable. But that is all. He is quite harmless, and does not even know that he is staring.

First Daughter: But *my* dear old thing is so fussy. You would not believe it. He insists on going to the railway-station three-quarters of an hour before the time, and you know what foreign stations are. When the luggage has to be examined he fumes so and jostles that I feel quite ashamed of him. I shall never forget him at Lugano, when we were starting homeward. Our baggage had to be weighed, of course, before registration. He took half an hour over that simple ceremony, recounting our whole life-story to the officials and blocking the way for a lady and her boy who were inexcusably and insufferably kept waiting. The grave officials kept their faces like a book. The lady, however, showed her impatience, and after my father had pocketed his luggage-registration-paper, which he immediately fancied he had lost, she said, in a sub-acid voice to her son: "Come along, Tom; it's about time,"—but the boy stood fascinated. "I like it," he answered. "Like what?" asked his mother. "Why, watching that funny old man." Luckily my father never heard him, and I tell you this in strict confidence. Wasn't it humiliating?

Third Daughter: I must say it was. Now my old fellow is quite different. He has only one fault when he travels. You will be surprised when you hear it. He never, by any chance, goes by the right train, so we never arrive at our destination. He takes a ticket, say, for St. Albans, which the train passes. We get out at Rugby. It is very expensive, but we get through a great deal of country. He is so absent-minded, poor dear. But he is not in the least fidgety, and returns as if nothing had happened. He is so absurdly absent-minded. That's all.

First Daughter : Now no girl is ever absent-minded, *is* she ?

Second Daughter : Nor fussy.

Third Daughter : Nor would any girl that I know of stare people out of countenance. On the whole, I think fathers are *de trop* on a journey, don't you ? But we must do our best for them, while we are with them, mustn't we ?

First Daughter : I suppose so. *They* pay.

Second Daughter : It would be so much better if they would hand the money to us, and let *us* take the tickets and all the rest of it.

Third Daughter : Rather !

Here endeth the second lesson.

V.—THE NEW LOO

(*A Girl of the Period*)

HAVE you met Miss Louisa of Kew,
Unavoidably, fatally " New,"
Who has caused such a shocking ado ?
Otherwise, wear this remnant of rue—
  Her developments curious
  Made the Kewlanders furious.
From her cradle her ways went askew.
The babe prattled of trifles untrue.
  Over Nurse with her rattles
  She won wicked battles,
Through an inkpot, hot water, and glue,
She was dubbed " Inkerman-Water-Loo."

Then in church, as upstanding she grew,
She would never sit still in the pew,
Setting everyone near in a stew.
All conventions this girl overthrew,
  When the bag of collection
  Came back for inspection
Peppermints had perfumed it—nor few.
Her mama for Louisa would sue
  And implore the Almighty,
  To make her less flighty,
But papa's imprecations were " blue,"
Such as slaughter a daughter—or slew
Temp : George three—when your offspring meant *you.*

E'en at school she concealed *billets-doux,*
Betting-books were the primers she knew,
She kicked up so much hullabaloo
  That in terrible distress
  Her flawless Headmistress
Redispatched her—an " empty "—to Kew.—
What on earth were her parents to do ?
  Granted they didn't oughter,
  This Prodigal Daughter
Was re-welcomed and petted anew.
For their mercy descended like dew,
And, however provoking her *moue,*
They refused to proclaim her taboo.

. . . .

Later on she would fox-trot till two,
And her game (like her name) became " Loo."
  Her diaphanous raiment
  Was never for day meant,
But expressly designed for Revue.
Through its folds icy Boreas blew.
(Yet she ne'er was laid up with the " flu.")
  And her changing complexion
  In every direction
Followed suit, corresponding in hue
To her chiffon, her stocking, her shoe,
And the tresses she'd re-reimbue
(To a shingle transformed from a cue)—
She resembled a plucked cockatoo.

Such vitality ! Brian Boroo !
It exhausted the crowds that she drew :
Professed acrobats could not pooh-pooh,
As she sprang like a mad kangaroo,
  Somersaulting on *pavés*
  Amid cheers from hot navvies ;
Pirouetting with each *pas-à-deux,*
While she flung quids of baccy to chew—
What on earth were her parents to do ?
  Should they pray Monsieur Coué
  To mesmerize Louie,
Could he turn her loud laugh to a coo ?
On her bed should they poppy-heads strew ?
Should they send her to Hanwell ?—O pheugh !

What she spent or who paid, not a clue !
But, as sharply remarked Mrs. Prue
(With a look as of cypress and yew),
" Loo's papa being thrifty
Allowed her but fifty,
Unconcerned how the treasuries flew."
Then at length he the latchkey withdrew,
Likewise tightened his bolts with a screw,
Making certain their nightbird to mew.
Yet at three in the morning
All the servants gave warning—
Loo had shattered six panes and leapt through
'Mid the frantic applause of her crew,
Who continued to shout and to boo !—
What on earth were her parents to do ?

. . . .

One wet day on the threshold at Kew,
Among neighbours agog for a view,
Stood an elegant, opulent Jew,
With a volume inscribed " I.O.U."
And a smart Daimler carriage
To beg Loo in marriage,
Upon terms that were moderate too.
He stood rather to win than to woo—
What on earth were her parents to do ?
Loo herself, the world's pupil,
Undeterred by one scruple,
Would have taken a wealthy Hindoo,
Or an ebony monarch Zulu
From the wide matrimonial Zoo—
And is now Lady Shylock-Carew.
Let us trust no divorce will ensue.

VI.—TWO MORE NEW WOMEN

(1) Motoritis

To see my Motoritis drive
  Yields universal pleasure,
So gracefully doth she contrive
  Her modesties of measure.
She is my heart, of me the gear,
  The Rollsest-Roycest creature.
Then why, whene'er she starts to steer,
  Sits Woe on every feature?

She ne'er would rest till yonder car
  Was hers by monthly capture—
High empyrean of her star,
  Quintessence of her rapture.
And yet her lips, her eyes are set;
  Her figure shows constriction,
Without a care or debt, why fret,
  Why suffer such affliction?

Drive to me only with thine eyes—
  No petrol I'll set eye on.
Thou skimmest earth as birds the skies
  Or erst the waves Arion.
Transcendent transports *should* be thine,
  O spirit omnipresent:
Why look, then, like St. Catherine,
  Who found her wheel unpleasant?

My inmost sparklet, prithee smile.
Afoot you used to do so,
Glare not, as on his desert-isle,
When first forsaken, Crusoe.
Why ?—Is't, o more beloved for this,
Because few modern ladies
The motor-martyr's rod can kiss
Without the pangs of Hades ?

(2) Lecturitis

Not the dullest of lecturers bore would
An inveterate spinster of Norwood
Who was named Lecturitis (Anne Forwood).
She devoured discourses
On " Equal Divorces,"
Codes—Justinian's (and Morse's),
Ev'ry shell of the four seas,
Sea-weed the shore sees.
Evolution—the Horse's,
All the stars in their courses,
Sex-selection in gorses,
Centrifugal forces,
Mystic Verse—as Tagore's is,
Metaphysics, their sources,
Mathematics—Condorcet's,
Economics—Webb's or C.'s,*
Drama—Ibsen the Norse's,
Fiction—Baroness Orczy's,
Dandies—Brummells or D'Orsays.
The New Music—(*sic*) Strauss's,
And French History—Torcy's.
On Disease and its causes,
The Versailles Treaty-clauses,
On Etrurian Vases,
And the sort of Joan Shaw's is.
These abstrusenesses free, with fanatical glee
She,
On returning to Norwood,
Would pore over, and store would.

* Professor Cassel.

But, poor darling, the strain
Of weak nerves, ditto brain,
Brought her infinite pain.
Till one day,
Sad to say,
Sadder still to explain,
She cut open a vein.

The grave Coroner said,
After shaking his head,
With a sorrow sincere,
That the reason was clear.
All the doctors concurred
Without question or word :
" It is *not* Laryngitis,
Phlebitis, Neuritis "
(Lengthy notes upon which appeared e'en on her nighties).
No, no.
'Tis *not* so.
'Tis a " complex " forbidden 'em,
Who reside around Sydenham.
And the choicer its prey,
The more fatal its way.
What the doctors averred
The whole jury has heard.
But the strange thing in sight is
That our much-esteemed friend
In thus meeting her end
Has deceased of *herself*—Lecturitis.

Moral :

Small learning made her mad. The world's great college
Recks of no byways to the Tree of Knowledge.
The Serpent, whose designs I need not mention,
First founded University Extension.
Peace to her ashes ! May no seraphs harden
Her lot by lecturing on Eden's garden !
Her name was her undoing. Had she married
She would have changed it, and not thus miscarried.—
Pay no regard to patronymic fancies,
But stay anonymous and take your chances.

VII.—THE NEW ADVERTISEMENT

(1) Nitro-Laxo-Bromide-Gazogene

" Nitro-Laxo-Bromide-Gazogene,"
The most wonderful cure ever seen,
Keeps the blood indescribably clean,
Acts like magic on liver and spleen ;
It renews all within you,
Braces muscle and sinew :
As a Laxative, mix our " Spumine."

As a Dentifrice, boil a poteen
Of twelve tabloids, add Glycerine.
And your dentals are dazzling in sheen.
Should they ache, 'tis a safe anodyne.
As a Hairwash, it blesses
Super-baldness with tresses
Overflowingly hyacinthine.

Then, if inwardly taken between
Each repast in half-pints of shebeen,
Rough complexions grow soft as sateen,
Stubborn Eczemas vanish, and e'en
Rheumatoid Arthritis
Overcome in a night is—
It heals case upon case of Gangrene.

If Depressions intense supervene
On activity's happiest scene,
When your slumber is never serene,
And " blue devils " succeed to chagrin,
Drink ten tumblers per diem—
Unawares you defy 'em—
All we say we most certainly mean.

In good health, fresher vigour you glean.
Its vitaminous Acetylene
Heartens Mothers their infants to wean.—
If too fat, it will soon make you lean,
  If too thin, it will issue
  In adipose tissue.—
As a Tonic, it conquers Quinine.

A Physician of note—*Nota Bene!*
For Sea-sickness prescribes seventeen
With a pinch of our best " Pepperine "
On hot ginger-nuts (choose Peek and Frean),
  Then the worst Bay of Biscay
  Will discover you frisky,
As the water-nymph, Fouqué's Undine.

Do you smoke overmuch for Hygiene ?
Are you septic with foul Nicotine ?
Have you vainly invoked Iodine ?
Do you cough from a larynx obscene ?
  Try our antidote's virtue—
  Cigarettes cannot hurt you,
Continental, Virginian, Cairene.

Save your Laundry-bill. Heat a tureen
Of the fluid, infuse " Brassoline,"
Add a dash of our best paraffine,
It will wash the most frail *Crêpe de Chine.*
  Spots and stains it demolishes,
  Chairs and cutlery polishes.
Very little will cleanse a canteen.

Save your Brains, at the Cross-word. " Larin "
May disorder them, ditto " Proteine,"
Or (from Tasso, of course) " Aladine."
  Persevere in your doses
  Until " Metempsychosis "
Solves itself, also " Lake Thrasimene."

Mrs. Muggleford near Golders Green
For a year hid her face with a screen
In a bath of expensive List'rine.—
Till some angel announced " Gazogene."
Fides omnia vincit—
See the photographs inset
(Left to right) : " Oh, the contrasts are keen ! "

Writes a Bard, " 'Tis the Fount Hippocrene " ;
A New Artist, " I rival Jan Steen " ;
A New Singer, " I'm Chaliapin " ;
A Chauffeur signs, " Yours, while this machine." *
Ah ! if Shakespeare, J. Cæsar
And Tiglath-Pileser.†
Had but known, if Napoleon, Lenin !—
How much better the lot must have been

Testimonials pour in—from a Queen,
From the Bench, from Archbishop and Dean,
From the Earl of De Vere and Vaccine,
From Sir Galahad Jones Gelatine,
From all chemists who stack it—
One and sixpence a packet :
Fifty sent in a dainty Terrene.

Beware counterfeits. None genuine
Without stamp (sealed with ultramarine).
Buy A Thousand, and win profits mesne
Through a coupon for Titan-Tontine.
Sole proprietors (British),
Messrs. Schander and Spittisch.
Telephone, " Number nought, Centraline."
—[ADVT.]

This parody should be contrasted with the cruder and less arrogant antiques. Not all ancient advertisers, however, were conscious of occasional double meanings. A country

* " Yours while this machine is to me."—" HAMLET."
† A variant of this passage runs :
" Ah, if William Shakespeare,
Pope Nicholas Breakspeare,
Had but known, with Napoleon, Lenin," etc.

chemist, for instance, once announced " So-and-So, M.Ph.S., *Dispenses with care.*" An obscure furniture shop, too, hoisted a placard with " Families removed with secrecy and dispatch." Nor should the familiar tag of the secondhand clothier be forgotten: " Mr. and Mrs. Such-and-Such, having left off clothing of every description, respectfully invite inspection." Arch-enthusiasts for the poet Blake will recall that he and his wife once did the same. The " respectfully " of the old advertisement contrasts charmingly with the bombastic bounce and slap-you-on-the-backness of the new varieties.

(2) The Unselfishness of Selfrod

(*By Theagenes*)

Viscount St. Albans—*temp.* Queen Bess—
Observes in his great essays
That true dispatch in business
Both ends of commerce blesses.
" *To choose time is to save it.*" Yes !

This motto wise
Fits merchandise
From charabancs to shell-fish.
And that is why
Our policy
Will never fail
Our clientèle—
A policy unselfish.

Reflect. The cunning *Pedlar* jobs
For one poor moment's profit,
Regardless how his shoddy robs
The wretched victims of it.
" Dispatch " means Choice, not Thingumbobs.

The *Merchant's* wide
And generous pride
Selects, collects: is never pelfish.
Little from much
Contents his clutch.
And this explains
Expanded gains.
Through being so unselfish.

Huge turnovers alone rejoice
  Both customers and coffers.
Dispatch the daintiest, choicest Choice
  The House of Selfrod offers.
Its quiet unpretending voice
Vaunts nothing bad or elfish :

  Its world-supply
  Of quality,
With Cheapness joined to Courtesy,
  Is yours to buy.—
  And this is why
  The more we try,
The more we grow unselfish.

(3) Autolycus and Co.

(*Purveyors by Appointment*)

If ever you without a fuss require a thing or so,
Remember, please, to visit us—Autolycus and Co.
Of all you lack is here a stack ungrudgingly bestowed
By the only licensed pickers-up of value on the road.
We save you every pitch-and-toss that putrefies a sale,
And all the stupefying loss Sapphira-shops entail.

We, most of us, are in Debrett.
  For gentlefolks our trade is.
And the Marchioness serves the Baronet,
  And a Duke inferior ladies.

What a worry is a wedding, when you've nothing left to spare.
And a gift for half a guinea is impossible elsewhere !
Our assortment is prodigious, and the secret of it lies
In the fact that friends in Tight Street daily furnish vast supplies.
All the Countesses in trouble, all the Earls who over-splash—
They return their wedding-presents, deeply discounted, for cash.

We, most of us, are in Debrett.
  For gentlefolks our trade is.
And the Duchesses serve Knights-banneret,
  And the Hamiltons the O'Gradies.

In these dreadful days of judgment, when small dwellings are so dear,
And the premium for a cellar means an income for a year ;
When flat-rentals bring you bankruptcy and winters are too keen
For a caravan or bathing-with-conveniences machine,
Come to us. We let you furnished at a hovel's cost loose ends
Of the residential mansions of aristocratic friends.

We, most of us, are in Debrett.
For gentlefolks our trade is.
And the new are served by Dukes in debt,
And the old by Counts from Cadiz.

We can offer introductions to the highest in the land.
There is no delay or trouble : in our office, there they stand !
We can get you gorgeous butlers any door-step to adorn—
A Right Honourable (" Labour ") bought one cheaply yester-morn.
Our bureau for foreign travel is the best the world affords—
Confidentially conducted ; all our Couriers are Lords.

We, most of us, are in Debrett.
Exclusive most our trade is.
We've a *Chef* who's heir to a coronet,
And our ladies' maids are ladies.

We have stocks of things transcendent—e'en quintuple wedding-rings,
And tiaras that were heirlooms, and fur-coats of exiled kings.
We teach débutantes to curtsey, millionairesses to dance ;
Should Chicago wish to marry upper circles, here's its chance.
But plebeian apparatus is beyond our proper sphere,
Such as gramophones, or wirelesses, or cars of lowly gear.

For none of us who grace Debrett,
Where every Lordship's shade is,
Would order a vulgar crystal set,
Or the finest Ford that made is.

(4) Wage's Dray

(*A Dramatic Dialogue in which the husband is silent*)

The Bride :

As you guess, Mr. Wage, we were married
  Only two months ago—on this day—
And my husband is hopelessly harried
  By the prices the poor have to pay.
This first visit was just for a call meant,
  As a test—but you take breath away—
Two pianos ! *One* paltry instalment ! !
  Is their transport expensive ?

Wage :

My Dray.
'Tis a plain motor-dray which (a treasure)
  Carries gratis what never is dear.—
Eh, your cheque ? Madam, keep it with pleasure,
  And I wish you a Happy New Year :
Plainly wish it, and prove it as plainly,
  All concerning my contracts is plain—
My plain figures, my workmen ungainly,
  Your pianos, my speech.

The Bride :

Thanks again.
But one matter (Don't chatter so, Percy)
  Does perplex me, most kind Mr. Wage.
" Generosity tempered with mercy "
  Stamps your catalogue's earliest page.
But you don't mean to say that, though planned here
  Is your system of payments deferred,
Clavichords reach our door as they stand here,
  Not in sections !

Wage :

I give you my word.
They arrive of perfection perfections,
With smart keyboards in wonderful woods.
Though you pay in half-century sections,
There is nothing deferred in the goods.
We deliver them ready for action
In our plain motor-dray, I repeat,
If they do not give full satisfaction,
Free of charge, they return to our street.

The Bride :

Percy, don't interrupt, dear.—Your kindness,
Mr. Wage, is astounding—Entire ?—
Yet one trifle occurred in our blindness
To my husband and me. Should a fire,
Should a fire, I say, conflagrate us
On delivery—far may it be !—
Please explain to us what is our status ?

Wage :

We provide you a policy *free,*
To all customers duly presented,
A plain policy. Look, word for word.

The Bride :

Thanks a thousand. We're more than contented.
The contingency, too, is absurd—
Percy, say so. Don't chatter inanely.—
Mr. Wage, you are matchless. Good-bye.
You want no guarantee ?

Wage :

Nothing plainly.
Your address ?

The Bride :

Is the Nest, Peckham Rye.

VIII.—THE "NEW ROT"

(*Mrs. Amanda Celm*)

Even at the dawn of this century there set in a partial vogue for the amateur neurotic which was flippantly named the "New Rot." It has, of course, nothing to do with those tragic visitations of agony that befell thousands during the uprooting War, and, alas, are still dooming a fresh myriad. It was then mainly a feminine pose, a new phase of the *malade imaginaire*, a frivolous excitement for bored valetudinarians. It was due in part to the perpetual motion of a whirligig age—an intense speed ministering to megrims. But it was at root a paper-chase by idle self-indulgence after "the bubble joy." This joy was not really joy at all, but pleasure—the "good time" which still deludes so many so hollowly, the good time which is in fact a bad time, the good time which cannot beat any time for the restless nerve-orchestra, but sways to and fro, wagging its weak baton over a discord that knows neither measure nor music. Since then this caprice has for some become a habit—a habit all the worse for sloppy degeneration. The newspaper reports teem with it; it affects or infects most classes in the kingdom, and it is rotten to the core.

One day it suddenly occurred to Amanda Celm, as she communed with her toilet glass, that she might become a Bacchante. That, you may be sure, was not quite how she phrased it to herself, for she was quite innocent of Greek mythology. But she had been reading some new novels that held up an occasional licence as almost a duty for the emancipated woman. And, of course, she scanned regularly those "stunts" of piquant escapades in the divorce cases and police-courts which nowadays polygamise

the Press—doubtless for the use of edifying *à la Hogarth* by contraries.

Amanda had been for seven years the wife of Carnaby Celm, a well-to-do squire in a remote county. He was her senior by over a decade, and if she had not married him for money (and she had not) she certainly would never have married him without it. He had wooed her beauty and won her hand in a small provincial town where her widowed father—who, if the truth were known, did not mind her bestowal elsewhere—was a third-rate auctioneer.

It was, indeed, a transformation scene for the girl to exchange the dinginess of the paternal hearth, and the drabness of its connections, for the " Georgian seat " of the Celms. As time went by, however, this fairy feeling wore off. Carnaby was never unkind, but he was apathetic, and he dozed a good deal after dinner. His people, who were uninteresting enough, naturally did not relish this union. So, barring a few hunt-balls and the like, with an annual visit about Derby-time to London, there was very little doing. They had no children. A woman like Amanda who was really a-moral—if she has no children must have something else to pet and carry about with her. She did not care for dogs, nor could she interest herself in clergymen. Institutions did not stimulate her. No one around her was " clever."

Subconsciously she believed that she was very clever—nobody else did—and she was confident that she was misunderstood. That was it, she had read of it in so many of her novels. She was misunderstood, and she had a *right* to redress. Every pretty, talented woman has. By luck, a new neighbour supplied the void, a Miss Sarah Goodland, well-to-do, not too good-looking, and with no incumbrances of any kind. Now, Miss Goodland was the first who gave out that Amanda was clever beyond words, and simply wasted on her ridiculous surroundings. She fully agreed that Amanda was brutally misunderstood : she alone seemed entirely to comprehend her. They struck up the closest friendship and became inseparables, to the great content of her husband, who now need never bother to exert himself on her behalf. Sarah did all the talking, half the driving, and a quarter of the billiard playing. A very good sort was Sarah, who kept Amanda well in hand. But if the squire could have " listened in " to one of their summer conversations, this is what he would have heard :

Sarah : My dear, you don't mean to say he never noticed your nice new frock ?

Amanda : He only grunted that he was afraid of my catching cold, and that influenza was expensive.

Sarah : Did he ? How often have I told you that you are terribly misunderstood—and are far too sensitive to let him know it ?

Amanda : What would be the good ?

Sarah : Oh, but you *must,* in justice to everybody. You are not looking well, dear.

Amanda : No wonder. It all gets on my nerves.

Sarah : There you have it. Nerves. Don't you see ?

Amanda : See what ?

Sarah : Listen to me. You must go home and tell him straight out how ill you feel.

Amanda : He would only wake up and laugh.

Sarah : You must take to your bed at once, dear, and be all of a tremble, and send for Dr. Gubbins—that spry, sporting little fellow with his eyeglass, racecourse air and funny English, who says, " *My* Jove," and once made even your husband smile by fearing to invade his " sanctium." But he is no exception to the invariable rule. Doctors rarely admit that anyone is well.

Amanda : That is true. How silly of me ; I never thought of it. *You* think of everything. But——

Sarah : But what ?

Amanda : Won't it be just a trifle duller than usual ?

Sarah : Gubbins, without meaning it, can be amusing——

Amanda : The vet might keep me upstairs for a month. But if you like I'll be thoroughly ill for a week, and then insist that I am a little better.

Sarah : How simple you are ! You will do nothing of the sort, dear.

Amanda : What *do* you mean ?

Sarah : You darling. Let me explain. I have hatched a little plan for you and me together—for us alone. You know my friend Lady Passington.

Amanda : What, the widow ?

Sarah : Well, the grass-widow, a little greener than she is black. She has a charming flat on the *right* side of the Rembrandt Hotel, and is going to Switzerland towards the end of July, when everyone who can goes away, and those who can't

draw down the blinds. She does not want a tenant, so I have begged her kindly to lend it to me (and you) just for a fortnight, and she writes to say how delighted she will be, if I pay the servants' board and wages—which of course I will——

Amanda : But London will be a desert.

Sarah : Except for some four million people who are always there. And for us country cousins not at all. Besides, every well-conducted desert has its oases. The off season is the real season for fun. The women are mostly gone : so are the married men. But the nicest bachelors remain in shoals. (*Reflectively*) It's the poaching season, I fancy.

Amanda : How funny you are !

Sarah : And there is plenty of elbow-room. The theatres are half empty, the Italian ice-men sit in the boxes with their children playing around them, and one can do what one likes —as the man said when he was divorced for the fifth time.

Amanda : You are really too funny. Did he say that ; and who was he ? But what are you driving at, Sally ? " Get on with it "—didn't someone say that in the House of Commons ?

Sarah : Driving at ? Why, summer-time, of course, as the same gentleman exclaimed also. You must remain in bed till the second week in July, when, though a trifle wobbly, you will be feeling fresher. Then Dr. Gubbins must—I'll see to that—prescribe *complete* change and quiet, adding that London out of season is by far the quietest and changiest place out—which is true.

Amanda : But will he, do you think, let me ?

Sarah : Really, you must not always refer to your husband as " he." Do call him Carnie, or something diminutive like that. The more you give them a small name, the bigger they feel. Surely you know that. *Let you !*—of course he will. I will come and explain that I should feel ever so desolate alone, and that *nobody could* look after you better than I. He, I'm sure, has had quite enough of town already. Besides, he lost all his bets, and the last hotel bill disagreed with him. He will ask his ugly sister Patricia and stingy brother Biggleswade to bring their families and stay with him. He's another man with children, you know.

Amanda : Don't insult me, Sally.

Sarah : How serious you are all of a sudden ! You are far too clever to think so, my dear misunderstood nerve-wreck. Let's forget and be forgiven everything, as the woman said

when she lost her latchkey—and, to put it vulgarly, "do a bunk," which is not in its way such a bad cure for boredom.

Amanda: You are *too* funny.

So all was arranged and went off according to plan. By the end of July these heavenly twins were installed in Treboozer Mansions on the *right* side of the Rembrandt Hotel. It was too good to believe. Here they were both together and at perfect liberty. Lady Passington's flat was furnished in the taste that especially pleased them. A negro figure stood grasping a red-shaded lamp in the little hall. There were variegated arm-chairs and luxurious divans within, piled with bizarre and superfluous cushions. A neat little stock of champagne and brandy, perhaps the only neat thing there, was left at their disposal—the very thing for a nervous patient; the library contained the latest novels only, and the tables abounded in huge signed photographs of obscurities with autographs below them in silver frames. The few pictures were muddy imitations of what their owner called the Louie Kangze period—young ladies and gentlemen kicking up their heels in violent swings, or lounging unencumbered on damp grass over the lightest repasts, while a masked musician twanged his enormous guitar underneath a mantle as flowing as his hair. In the bosky background strolling couples clasped each other's waists, bound apparently for some Wembley of the district. The parlour-maid was a jewel of discreet indiscretion. In a word, it was ideal.

* * * * * *

They sat in the front seats of a side-show at one of those "Exhibitions" which are really impositions in so far as they pretend to further some great national purpose, being at best only elephantine fancy fairs. Amanda looked charming in the full flush of her trip to licence-land. Sarah beamed with a consciousness that, duenna-like, she was playing the part of propriety to a possible impropriety. Everyone else had that strained look of determination to be pleased without absolutely being so, which is the speciality of such entertainments. On the other side of Amanda sat a smart-looking Colonel of a crack regiment who looked fifteen years younger than he was, for this is an age of discounts. He was one of those new Lotharios, who do not actually begin to sow their

wild oats—not too wild either—till they have passed their meridian. In earlier times he would have been called a bald-headed man with a past, but in these, I suppose, he was a less bald-headed man with a future.

On the other side of Sarah sat a wary-looking youth who was in a Government office, and wore the air of a spectacled Solomon just before he sat down to write "Ecclesiastes." Of course Amanda dropped her bead-bag according to Sarah's instructions, and, of course, the gallant Colonel picked it up. Conversation ensued about nothing—that is to say, about the show—and Amanda was delighted with the Colonel's chivalrous badinage. Sarah dropped her handkerchief, but her neighbour affected apathy, and then Sarah, resuming it, seemed to be lost in thought. At last she leaned across to Amanda and made some unusually clever remark, whereat the wise youth aforesaid incontinently smiled, and eventually deigned to be nicely sociable. All this was as it should have been.

Next, without warning, but also pursuant to plan, Amanda became faint and asked her friend for the smelling-salts. A gentle fluster followed. The Colonel was immensely concerned, and paid every possible attention. Even the Under-Secretary-of-State for Adventure politely asked Sarah if he could be of any use. Sarah, with profuse thanks, whispered explanations in her most confidential tones. Her young friend (a good touch, this) was convalescing after a mysterious illness. She had been doubtful whether it was right to bring her into so crowded a place, but her friend had overborne her, and she had not had the heart to refuse. All that she needed, she believed, was fresh air. So, in the quietest manner possible—the performance being providentially ended—she laid her hand on Amanda's shoulder and made to withdraw. In their fortuitous concurrence the two new friends, as was fitting for beauty in distress, piloted them with many apologies.

Together they found their way out with the least fuss possible, the Colonel escorting and supporting Amanda, while the young wiseacre offered futile suggestions with that air of ignorant omniscience which distinguishes our (and his) age. Once outside, the two guardian angels and the two ladies sat down on a bench fronting a fragrant parterre. Everything was new: the sudden acquaintance; the pasteboard background representing Monte Carlo, along the peaks of which swished a

motor switchback; the new rich and new poor thronging the scene, and the new moon.

After many attentions and many thanks on Amanda's part, she rose to go; and Sarah declared that it must be getting late. But the Colonel assured them that it was only just ten, which the wise young man confirmed; it would be a pity to miss such a lovely night now that the invalid was recovering. He had his car outside, and, with their permission, would drive them home whenever they felt bored. So down they all sat again, and lit cigarettes, just as the Alsatian band began—in hotel phrase—to "discourse sweet music."

The two ladies were not reluctant, the old youth, at last beginning to appreciate Sarah's wit, was equally willing. The Colonel offered a cigar to his casual acquaintance and immediately discovered that his father was a very old friend—so small is the world. And next he began to entertain them all. His quip about the highbrows as "Dis-Wemblers" met with more success than it deserved. He quizzed the crowd, the place, the situation. It was tattled that romance was dead. What nonsense! Never was it more alive, and he illustrated his point by endless society scandals. Look at Lady Marrable—he meant no possible offence, and probably they knew her—with all her faults a woman in a thousand—up to anything and everything, thoroughly well-plucked. Well, look at Lady Marrable. Within ten years she had been divorced five times—married in haste, divorced at leisure. She was in search of the ideal, don't you know—doosid difficult the ideal. Her last husband, Charlie Chattenor—the most popular fellow going—wanted her to settle down, for her nerves were all of a flutter. (Amanda again sniffed the salts.) He said it would be good for both of them to try Texas, and she bought a ranch there—simple life, don't you see, and that kind of thing. Well, out they went, and what do you think they found on arrival? —why, two of her former husbands as the nearest neighbours. Talk of romance! This beats cock-fighting, doesn't it? Two! And Charlie got jealous, and so did the others of each other, but in the end they all got on swimmingly together. A wonderful time, this. We've gone back to Queen Elizabeth, we have, and that's what I tell everybody—the golden age of romance. Of course, she came back, and by special request divorced Charlie. And then out she went again with her seventh to East Africa, and who should turn up but Charlie again? The most romantic

thing out, by George! a thrill for each moment, and that is why we all keep so young and can elope at eighty without any scene or *éclat.* How Prince Albert would have shivered, but, then, by Jove! there was no damned romance in the fellow, was there? And so the Colonel chuckled over the romantic age.

Thus they stayed chatting and laughing till the quartet grew as intimate in an hour as if they had been friends for years. Sarah's companion also lit on mutual acquaintances and was ravished with her knowledge of the world. She was *une belle laide* and no mistake. How much more piquant than the conventional doll! Amanda was by this time almost too well, and when the Colonel begged the party to give him the pleasure of their company at supper at the Maecenas Restaurant (" really not so bad, you know, and you might be in pre-War Paris "), they were all persuaded to accept after a slight show of resistance.

* * * * * *

The meal had been pleasant, and it was washed down with Clicquot. A little Clicquot is a dangerous thing, so the Colonel ordered a fair amount. As they issued from the restaurant into the balmy air, dance music was wafted on it, and the generous host, who was more terpsichorean than Terpsichore, took them all to peep into the *salon de danse,* with its black band. It looked far more amusing than Eden before the fall, and quite as guileless. Couples of every kind were dancing in a concentrated silence worthy of students in the British Museum. So he had small difficulty in persuading the party to enter. There, by turns, the two swains danced till closing-time was sounded. The Colonel, as Cupid, and Amanda, as Psyche, were in their element, nor will it be forgotten that this myth comes from Apuleius ' " Golden Ass." As for the other pair, to what myth shall we liken them? Which classical god was the prig as gallant and which goddess, the chaperon as philanderer? The Colonel drove back the revellers to their abodes, where each dreamed of the New Rot.

* * * * * *

You will observe that these asterisk-intervals are quite in the style of the new novel, and as they save trouble (though they may also give it), I would not for worlds be singular. For

nigh on a fortnight the four were constantly dining, luncheoning, shopping, play-going, driving together. Who shall say that "Crabbed Age and Youth cannot live together?" Luckily, Amanda preferred cinemas to theatres, but it must have been a balance-breaking fortnight for the Colonel, since he gave presents, while the wise youth, by now "gone" on Sarah, spent as little as decency would allow.

The best of friends must part, however, and at length the knell tolled for return. By this time—so quick are modern entanglements—our Ecclesiastes, junior, had secretly become engaged to Sarah, while the ever-green and infatuated Colonel had established an *entente cordiale* with the misunderstood martyr of Celm Hall. He "understood" her perfectly, the most rescuing of men, a veritable Perseus to her Andromeda. Photographs were exchanged and vows of correspondence, Sarah even contriving a cypher. The Colonel would have motored them down, and Amanda hesitated, but Sarah's veto was law. Farewell, farewell, and *au revoir* (which Amanda pronounced "*oh river*"). The last thing that the prodigal descried was the Colonel's waving bandanna and the kiss cautiously blown by Ecclesiastes.

* * * * *

The sole sign of advancing years that the Colonel ever displayed was a lack of discretion. He would blab of things after dinner. Now it so happened that he had just been elected to an excellent club and was invited to dine there with his proposer to celebrate the event. That night he was especially unreserved, chronicled a long and mostly apocryphal list of his *bonnes fortunes*—"In Italia mille e tre," as the song has it in Mozart's "Don Giovanni." And then inadvertently he blurted out Amanda's name, speaking of her as if she were "The Whole Duty of Man." His host, knowing his friend's little foibles, also knew that there was only one way of exit, and he took it.

"You had better be careful here," he said, *sotto voce*, looking with vigilance round the room. "I suppose you know that Carnaby is an old member of this club, and has many acquaintances in it?" "The devil he has," quoth the Colonel uneasily, "but what of that? There's nothing in it, old chap, I give you my solemn oath. Besides, she told me that he is the best-natured fellow alive, easy-going, and unsuspicious to a fault, one who would never exaggerate trifles—only dull, so

damned dull." Then his friend became resourcefully inventive. "Oh, she said that to you, did she, and you believed it. You mustn't always expect accuracy from women. Why, Carnaby is the very devil, slow to stir, but when once stirred—I tell you, man—he's a regular Othello. Right or wrong, he would think nothing of horse-whipping anyone in public of whom he had the flimsiest doubts."—"The devil he would, would he? Two can play at that game, you know. When I was at Rajpootana, I tell, you, I——" "Don't make a damned fool of yourself before these waiters," he interrupted. "I hate a scene, and so will you if you don't take devilish good care."—"You don't mean to say——" "I do; and look here, Carnaby is a very strong man, an absolute Sandow, you understand. What! you have promised to write to her?"—"Why, what's the harm in letters?"—"Really, you might have been born yesterday instead of over half a century ago. It's your incorrigible vanity and infernal constitution that's the matter with you. Now, don't deny it, and listen to me. You are to swear this moment on your honour that you will not write a line, as you value the peace of all concerned; and if she writes to you first, as sometimes happens, you are not to answer. Promise me. Mind, on your word of honour as an officer in the Army and a new member of this club for whom I am responsible. Be sensible and swear it."—"But——" "But be damned. 'But' lost the last election. Do as I advise or you will regret it. And burn her photograph, for I'm sure she must have given it. By the by, did you give her yours?"—"I hadn't one left for the dear little creature, but I promised to be photographed again and send four to choose from."—"Four! you silly old ass, you are always being photographed. You can thank your stars that there is one folly from which you have been saved. Now be sensible." He was.

* * * * * *

Ariadne pined on the island of Naxos. She wrote again and again to Bacchus the forsaker, imploring a reply and protesting that her nerves was so unstrung that she would have to take refuge in a home recommended for such cases by her doctor—one full of weary musicians and broken-down welfare-workers. She even begged Sarah to inquire if the Colonel were dead, for otherwise such cruelty was inexplicable. But by now Sarah was married to Ecclesiastes, who would not permit any

such thing. Alas, poor Ariadne! Whether she went into the home, and whether she there found another Colonel or some peace-substitute, whether Carnaby Celm long survived, whether Amanda married again, how Sarah came to quarrel with her dearest friend, whether the Colonel ever sailed on another voyage to Cythera, I know not. For the New Rot the most drastic cures are needed. The curtain falls on equal opportunities in an unequal world.

IX.—THE NEW EUGENIST

(Dissuading Marriage)

It nearly drives one to despair
That multitudes live unaware
  Of pseudomorph diseases,
And feed on suicidal fare
  Which poisons while it pleases.
" Purins " and " Endocrins " they flout,
Raw vegetables do without ;
In wine they wallow, ale and stout.
  The meat they eat's the way men's
Fibroids must by law divine
Their sub-intestines undermine
  For lack of arch-vitamens.
Membranologics pass ignored,
  Defied is Diathesis,
While the ganglions of their spinal cord
  Fall aimlessly to pieces.

How seldom ponder folks who wed
(By haste and ignorance misled),
  On what ancestral blight is.
On how Paralysis is bred,
  Or Gout, or Meningitis.
On swollen great grandfather's hips,
On twisted great grandmother's lips,
On conjugal first-cousinships—
  How imbecile all this is !
Are you so blind to each surprise
Engendered through dim centuries
  Of pulmonary Phthisis ?
Freud's Psycho-analytics rare
  For fools are vain and arid,
Who in St. George's, Hanover Square,
  Researchlessly get married.

A Paleozic tooth suppose,
Which most indubitably shows
  Py'rrhœal symptoms patent,
That prove, as knowledge grows and grows,
  Your's heritably latent,
Your's horribly, by line direct
(Andropithecal I suspect)—
So Paleologists connect
  The uncertain with the certain.
Your manducatory organ chimes
With his of Paleolithic times,
  You cannot drop the curtain.
You cannot swear, " No damn I care
  How this Man-Monkey's ailments,
Or any faked forefather's fare,"
  You *cannot* shirk entailments.

Of course some forty years or so
Of wise delay might come and go
  To consummate this process.
And *names* are riddles—who can know
  What meant Anastomosis ?
'Tis possible that many a pair
Might rest in cemeteries ere
They, with St. George's blessing, were
  Hygienically mated.
Decay might overtake the scene
Before their bill of health was clean
  Or adequately stated.
Such sacrifice would scarce be vain,
Think how Posterity would gain
By freeing ten or twelve from pain,
  Thus duly procreated.

Pause, reckless bridegroom : wait and see.
Inspect, rash bride, thy pedigree.
  Each past forebodes the future,
Establish that no taint unclean
Defiled your stock when Bess was Queen,
No rupture, ambushed in between
  A post-cerebral suture.

For Science reigns, unfailing lord ;
Avenger of decrees ignored,
By founding a degenerate horde
That long neglect increases.
Nor, in rebellious disaccord,
Can *you,* your selfish selves, afford
Descendants, nephews, nieces,
The ganglions of whose spinal cord
Fall bit by bit to pieces.

X.—THE NEW BRIDE

Some of us remember the Victorian bride, led like a lamb to the slaughter (or altar, or halter), with her lace veil and orange blossom, her eight bridesmaids, her mother's tearful embrace as she presented a family Bible, her father fuming and fussing in the hall lest the carriage should be late, and James the old coachman with John the new footman proud of their bouquets and white favours. Then the punctual arrival at the church, the vast gathering of relations and friends,as it were for the Day of Judgment, the solemn hush save for an occasional whisper as to why Aunt Jemima is absent or whether the bride will trip over her train—the three officiating clergy, the faint responses, the best man who stood like a mute at a funeral and dropped his hat, the "Voice That Breathed o'er Eden," Mendelssohn's Wedding March, the signing of the register, when everybody kissed everyone for half an hour. The drive home, when Papa kissed the bride, and wondered whether the crossing-sweeper had been tipped; the buzzing arrival, the ordeal of the young couple standing on a dais and mechanically shaking hands with the audience of the show, and at last the downright good, sit-down, solid meal of the wedding-breakfast for two continuous hours, when champagne flowed like water or the speeches which it prompted.

Nothing was hurried, all was very human; while the old fellows remembered their own wedding-days and chaffed their wives, who said, "Don't be silly, Tom"; while the groomsmen flirted shyly with the bridesmaids, but felt how nervous they would be if they stood in the bridegroom's glacé-kid boots.

And, last, the family group taken by the family photographer not without much laughter over the incessant re-arrangements of the *dramatis personæ*. I omit the exercises of cutting the wedding-cake and inspecting the presents because these still

survive. Afterwards, an interval during which every servant in the Square hung out his or her head with various rollicking exclamations. The bride in her travelling trousseau, the bridegroom who always forgot something, the drive off amid cheers and rice, the evening with a dance or at a theatre—all this was home, not restaurant.

Ah! those were jolly weddings and reunions; not merely one more chance entertainment or a tiresome game of General Post. One would have wished Hamlet so to have wedded Ophelia, instead of the morbid fits and starts that sent the poor girl into the river. And even if, as once happened at the marriage of an heiress to an impecunious guardsman, his brother-officers were to laugh at "With all my worldly goods I thee endow," or someone were profanely to whisper, "Who giveth away this money to be this man's wife?" still the family business was properly carried on, and the patriarchal tradition survived. Nobody reported to the newspapers what everyone wore. All was private, not public, and Vesta of the hearth was justified of her worshippers. The bride was, as a rule, very young in those days. She followed the beck of Nature. She was not a girl-bachelor who chooses the man whose dancing-step the most accords with her own. And she was not a "mate," but a wife.

Divorces were comparatively rare, and were deemed far more disgraceful than they are at present. I do not say that there is not another side—there ever is. The Victorian prude was not always less prurient than her successors. But I do say, balance the sum total before you decide. For now what do we often see? I am speaking of the so-called "Society" marriages, mind you, and not of the dear bumpkins or citizens who still retain the Victorian flavour. Roxana, who has succeeded Ophelia, is not in the least sentimental; she does not even toy with feeling. She has announced her engagement. She announces it as an incident, or even an accident, just as she might announce a legacy or an operation for appendicitis. At best she announces it as an investment. She has seen life, and, on the whole, she thinks that Alexander will do. Having thus decided, her whole energies are bent on staging the wedding—indeed, she is very near holding rehearsals of it. For it will all be in the papers. It must be a pageant. It will be called a golden or a silver wedding, according to the garments worn and the advertisements that the milliners may circulate. The New

Hymen carries no torch, but a dazing limelight. And so you get a flaring account (heaven save the mark!) of:

SOCIETY WEDDING.

THE FIELD OF THE CLOTH OF GOLD.

Miss Roxana Dilbury weds
(how should a female "wed"?)
Sir Alexander Grate Spofforth.

BRIDE AND BRIDESMAIDS ATTIRED IN GOLDEN TISSUES.

Four Hundred Guests Entertained
at Marridge's Hotel.

A Feast of Flowers and Lanterns.

Am I exaggerating? Am not I rather compounding a sort of meat-extract of the affair? Do I not omit the dinner-party of the night before, when a company amounting to the whole population of a small town sat down to a monstrous banquet, Covent Garden was ransacked, and a large theatre taken? In the name of Nero, why is everything now so big in its littleness? If to protest against extravagant inanimate vulgarities be "reactionary," such a reactionary I am proud to remain. Good-night, Roxana. Dream of a cheque-book. Take your money-moon at Monte Carlo and go the same round of luxurious dullness till you are bored to death, but for heaven's sake do not call this marriage.

XI.—THE NEW BRIDEGROOM

THE general coldness which attends the wane of sentiment in private life (save in the case of some parents and many charwomen) also distinguishes the modern bridegroom. True, he is a little less mechanical than the bride, but the spiritlessness of the moment has also touched him. To begin with, Sir Alexander, after a week-end in a country-house, proposed by telephone. It was something of an imbroglio, because by a trifling error he happened to propose to an elder sister. The brief conversation was more or less as follows :

He : Hallo ! is Miss Dilbury at home ?

Servant : Yes, sir. What name ?

He : Please tell her that Sir Alexander Spofforth would like to speak to her.

Servant : Kindly hold the line a moment.

(*He does hold it for five minutes.*)

Roxana's sister : Hallo ! is that Sir Alexander ?

He : Rather. How are you ?

R.'s sister : Moderate to fair, thank you. And you ?

He : 'Ish for the moment. I wanted to tell you how awfully I enjoyed myself, and how much I have been thinking of you ever since.

R.'s sister : Really ? That's very decent of you.

He : Awfully. It's no good beating about the bush. Honest Injin, I cannot get on without you. We got on so infernally well together, didn't we ?—at least, I hope you will back me up. What are the odds, Roxana ?

R.'s sister : A hundred to one against in this race, Sir Alexander.

He (*laughing awkwardly*) *:* " Sir " ! Why, you called me Alec when I said goodbye.

R.'s sister : Did I ? (*Keeping it up.*)

He : Of course you did. And that other fellow—what's his name ?—Captain Bracegirdle, damn him, he——

R.'s sister : I happen to be engaged to Bracie, Sir Alexander.

He (affecting sang-froid) : What !

R.'s sister : Our voices are said to be very like.

He : Our !

R.'s sister : Yes, mine and Roxana's. I'm her eldest sister, Penelope, you see, and I was staying elsewhere when you visited us. There's a little mistake—a misfit, as you might say. Eh !

He : I'm most confoundedly sorry.

R.'s sister : Don't say that, please, for in spite of everything I might have taken you at your word (*with emphasis*), Alec. Two birds with one stone, you see.

He : Squish ! It's awfully good of you to say that, you know—but seriously, this is no joke. You see the situation ?

R.'s sister (laughing) : Rather ! Quite amusing, isn't it ? Ta-ta. I'll call Roxana. (*To the telephone*) *:* Another quarter of an hour's trunk-call, please.

He : Oh, thanks awfully, I'm sure.

So somewhat after this manner Alexander the Great escaped from being engaged to two sisters at once—which has happened before. About two months later I overheard him at a club-table planning with his friends every detail of the approaching ceremony—so coolly and minutely, with such calculations about wills, settlements and precedence that he might have been organizing an Arctic Expedition.

Once in church, however, he became comparatively shy. Like most men, he hated fuss, and the vague instinct that he was being made a fool of asserted itself. The " reception " was, of course, held at Marridge's, and there he behaved admirably, as he always does when in action. He looked after the gaudy crowd unflaggingly, spoke in tactful monosyllables, and certainly deserved something better than the Roxana whom he had thus wooed and won. If hereafter any real catastrophe should befall them, if by a miracle they should be ruined, he will bear adversity like a man, while she will bear it by opening a bonnet-shop and meeting her Alec the Great on occasional railway platforms. For modernism cannot (save in decadent exceptions) kill manhood. It is for womanhood that its main

murders through a rampant "femininism" are reserved. May peace attend his matrimonial pyre! Nothing was left unphotographed or uninterviewed.

These two little sketches have purposely omitted the registrar's office marriage. Its dreariness must be terrible. We all know from the newspapers how "quiet" it is. How the bride, wearing "a smart fur toque trimmed with osprey feathers (or is it asparagus?), plights her civilian troth to a bridegroom "who carried a brown Trilby hat." Nothing to which a normal girl looks forward or a normal man remembers is here. It presents a conjugal baldness which no artifice can beautify. It turns romance into contract, and the solicitor himself resents an intrusion on the perquisites of his profession. If you must be married by a registrar, why not be divorced by him also? This is a reform which I heartily commend to Parliament. Why should not ships too be made a province of the registrar, and then shipwrecks would also appertain to it? At any rate, in the case of weddings, and in these days of unemployment, the registrar might at least hire an organ and a choir. Perhaps he might, further (with some enlargement of salary), deliver a short address out of a standard book of such homilies. I daresay that his advice would be fully as grandfatherly as the exhortations to which we are getting hardened. The two bears—Bear and Forbear—would probably be its refrain, and a collection might be made for the benefit of the Society for Befriending Distressed Clergymen.

XII.—THE NEW MOURNER

And now my note shall change. I think that the new mourner is infinitely preferable to the old one. Recall the bygone scenes in upper middle class households. The drawing-room is full of the furthermost family branches, who are marshalled in due order. First the nearest of kin, next the next nearest, and so on to the younger and perhaps more impressionable generations. The undertaker's men are obtrusively handing the programmes, as it were, and the little black books of the funeral service. There is some real emotion, no doubt, but more of forced family feeling. The undertaker's guild deals out the funeral service cards in this game of double dummy, and the family doctor refuses with the remark that he knows it by heart. Nothing is spontaneous. Everything is heavy. It is like the mourning for Sun Yat Sen, the Chinese Bolshevik, "a compulsory mourning."

There is the drive to the church in marshalled order, the drive to the burial ground in eliminated sections, the show of a grief universal, the fact of a grief genuine, may be, but nobly stifled. All the wreaths and crosses are deposited as by universal provision. Back the mourners drive to a refection which is an inverted version of a wedding-breakfast. The family solicitor is, of course, there, with the will in his pocket—to be read before the œcumenical council a few hours afterwards. Everything is formal. And then the mourners disperse with a sense of fictitious duty. The world resumes its way, and the woe-pillars on the writing-paper are so solid that the usual acknowledgments of sympathy seem but a fly-scrawl between them. All this is conventional and little more than ancestral usage. The parish priest regards it in the light of a subscription to the parish charities, the family, as a whole, regards it as a form of death-dues.

This has all changed. There is now much more unobscured

sorrow from those who feel it, and much less obscuring crape—the crape that made the fortune of the Morrisons. The poorer classes always loved the show of grief, and re-impoverished themselves by its display. A funeral without it was regarded (and sometimes still is) as a family disgrace. The bourgeoisie accepted it as a beloved outward and visible sign. When I used to see the mutes with their trailing hat-bands on the return journey, laughing, smoking and chattering on the hearse's dangling board, with their backs turned to the vacant space—grotesque travesties of mock-woe—I used often to wonder what other profession they plied at night. Did they play in the theatre orchestras? And the jet-black horses, were they painted?

The modern mourner does not mourn by book. He either pays his last tribute of respect, or he is grieved without ostentation. He is not always writing letters of commercial condolence; sorrow with him or her is not by ledger. Moreover, those most concerned blush paraded mummeries. They are reticent, not sentimental. There is a reserve fund behind their mourning. Their tributes are not floral visiting-cards left in the last letter-box of the deceased.

And yet there are still the semblances that habit sanctions. How many who utter that prayer over the grave for a speedy removal to join the elect really mean it? They do not, as a rule, long to be caught up in the skies and leave a world which, if distressing, is not without very real compensations. Unhappy they are from the rupture of affection, but they are not despairing. They will persevere in work and in play, and thereby they will honour the dead. They do not really long to be quit of life's interactions.

Sometimes, however, there are modern funerals dreadful in their conflicting glossiness. I recollect one some years ago in a fashionable cemetery, faultless in its veritable Garden of Eden. The setting was an earthly paradise. The service might have been a scene out of a Gaiety musical comedy. The hymn was "Now the Labourer's Task is O'er," though it was sung for one who had never laboured. At the railway station in a reserved theatrical box was the service of "a sumptuous collation." This was a "smart" interment—one of the many that the newspapers now commemorate by a long list of funeral guests—rather like those juxtapositions of articles on "The Atonement" and "Asparagus" which I have mentioned elsewhere.

Once more I remember the full-blooded funeral service of a celebrated actor in a fashionable church—one that the ancientry of a quiet conventionalism would have repudiated. The whole resembled a last-night performance. All the " first-nighters " attended, a noted songstress trilled an anthem which nearly burst the roof. A sympathetic bishop—on whom stalls had often been showered—preached a sermon idealizing the good fellow who had stolen out of career to eternity. Outside, the hawkers were vending his record and photograph as if at some fancy fair. It was melodrama, not mourning. You could hear the prompter behind the scenes.

By way of contrast I recollect years ago to have read an awesome inscription on an old tombstone. The husband died first, and on the stone is still visible : " Anne, I am waiting for you." Within a year the screed was fulfilled. The patient Griselda, who for years may have obeyed a bullying tyrant, meekly responded. Who knows whether she really sighed for this forced reunion ? But, terrorized maybe, she obeyed. The tombstone commemorated her due compliance a year afterwards.

On the other hand, again, I remember the reverse—the celebration in his old public school of a promising youth whose career the fates had cut short by death in action before his prime had been reached. The Last Post sounded. The summons hence thitherward was poignant. And the remotest witness of that final tribute

revolved the sad vicissitude of things.

This is far more typical of the new-style emancipation from observance. The Victorian mourner mourned often by rote. The latter-day mourner hates to do so. If he cannot feel he hates to pretend, and he is less demonstrative. There is much more sincerity in to-day's funeral than yesterday's. But, after all, we have only reverted to Gray's Elegy. The churchyard means something vital to us all. The eighteenth century —often so falsely decried as artificial—has reasserted its realistic appeal—a wistful appeal sculptured in marble. It is the later, ceremonious appeal to sentimentality that has vanished. No longer do we mourn general bereavement ; we mourn personal severance. This is the central factor. I hold that in a distressed, perplexed, and undirected century nothing is more candid, nothing simpler than grief. And an Englishman's

grief is not worn on his sleeve. It needs no oblique effervescence of affliction. It is direct. The parson and the lawyer fade into the background.

> I cannot but remember such things were,
> And are most dear to me.

XIII.

TWO NEW ECHOES

(1) The New Song

(By a Rhymed-out Novice)

I am waiting for you, love,
  At the bottom of the lane.
I am waiting my true love
  At the bottom of the lane.
I am waiting my *new* love
  At the bottom of the lane.

There is also an *old* love,
  Permit me to explain ;
An old and a cold love
  At the summit of the lane,
An antique and most bleak love—
  In this unexpected rain.

So I trust you will stay, love,
  In the middle of the lane,
For I can't get away, love,
  From the bottom of the lane—
Please excuse this delay, love,
  It shall not occur again.

(2) A New Wish

Mine be no cot beside a hill
Where Boreas whistles chill and shrill.
No cot be mine beside a stream
Where factories vent their smoke or steam.

Mine be no cot on fertile plains
Where everlastingly it rains.
Indeed, to cut my story short,
No cot on earth be my resort.

No flat be mine, if I may choose,
Where kitchen-smells the rooms perfuse,
Where nought is private or unheard,
From quarrels to a pudding stirred.

Mine be no so-called maisonette,
The salvage of a house unlet ;
From upper landings deftly formed
To keep inhabitants unwarmed.

Be mine a simple snug abode
Just sheltered from the Brompton Road,
With no waste mewing-ground for cats—
No cots, no maisonettes, no flats.

XIV.—A NEW KING

After a great and desolating war there followed a treaty five miles long, yet in its bewildering purport small in proportion. It created seventeen new States, and no one knew exactly where they were. By one of those trifling accidents common to the omniescient politicians of that day, the name of a general was confused with the name of a town in this conversion of tiny races into arbitrary nations. So by consequence the kingdom of Pliff was instituted, to the great annoyance of General Pliff—like so many foreign generals, of Irish origin. Had the politicians been aware of this, the new principality would have been named O'Pliff, but this last indignity the distinguished officer was spared. The one thing, however, on which the black-coated gentlemen were bent was that the new State should be absolutely ultra-democratic. Most of its previous rulers, however they were styled, had been despots. Its new King, therefore, was to be no King, or even President. He was to wear a crown on the express condition that it was not to exceed half a crown, and indeed a corresponding coinage was already in contemplation so as to symbolize that central aim.

The difficulty was to find a king to suit it. Pliff was a poor region, and the new King, therefore, must be well-to-do. A few American millionaires were put into requisition, but they all replied that "they were not taking some that morning." The politicians were at their last gasp, when a Swiss banker informed them in strict confidence that the very man for their game had long been resident in the Canton of Berne. He was of royal extraction through remote interalliances extending back as far as Frederick the Great's head-washerwoman, and somehow he claimed to be a prince. At present he was a director of a bank of equal antiquity, and his name was Constantine Plotz. Prince Plotz was rich, amiable, and, outside his bank-directorship which did not trouble him, of no particular

occupation. His age was that of most people—fifty ; he was a widower, and he had only one anxiety which precluded him from being a Serene Highness—namely, the worries caused by his only son and child Boris.

Boris had joined the anarchists, and his headquarters were at Lugano, whence he issued proclamations denouncing all rulers and all capitalists—Kings and Jews. These people only existed to be despoiled, he said, by Comrade Boris Plotz and his associates. All this sort of thing caused great annoyance to the Prince, especially as they were attended by threatening demands for cash.

Now, here, wrote the Swiss gentleman, was a prime opportunity for the politicians. The Prince had no politics, was easy-going, and, if he could be persuaded to accept the half-Crown of Pliff, would have an army five hundred strong at his democratic disposal—which might be useful in curbing Boris' intimidations. Moreover, the population of Pliff being half brigands and half peasants would suit the Prince to a hair. Fond of sport and of agriculture, he would sympathize with his people's pursuits. And so they would become his natural sons in contrast with that unnatural Boris who was fast becoming the plague of his life. The sole *trait* of the Prince's temperament, which the Swiss gentleman omitted in his letter, was that of his weakness for female society.

The international politicians who always catch at chaff breathed a sigh of relief after their American rebuff, and forthwith despatched a long letter to Prince Constantine, assuring him of their confidence and counting on his super-democracy. The Prince was pleased and flattered. He was getting rather bored with Berne, which good theatrical troupes now visited less than formerly, and he reflected that Pliff lay at a great distance from Lugano. The only thing that puzzled him was all this bother about democracy. Switzerland, he knew, was rather dull, but it was a republic. Kings, he supposed, were somewhat lively. Had an ultra-democratic king any chance of liveliness ? What did it all mean ? So he went to consult an old professor at Bâle whom he had long liked and trusted. The old gentleman laughed when he read the sententious offer. " My dear Prince," he said, " pay no attention to any of this political bombast. If you make yourself affable to everybody, give them dinners in bad restaurants, mix with the citizens, dance with the brigands' daughters and

kiss the peasantesses, present everyone with a vote at the age of ten, and depute a field-marshal to preside over your parliament—all will go well. Nothing could be more hyper-democratic. Let them all do as they like—and if they don't," he added with a sly smile, "well, perhaps, you can make them. One thing more, at every public banquet begin with shame to take the highest place." The Prince, who was naturally shy, never forgot so to do.

So all was arranged, and the Prince was duly crowned with the half-diadem aforesaid in the Cathedral at Pliff amid the applause both of Court and people. A year's revenue was spent on this ceremony, which was a huge success. At first the new King found his avocations agreeable. The little capital humming with trams and the national anthem, which was played every hour by an unmilitarist band, amused him. A very pretty *prima donna* performed in the miniature theatre, and, though the ugly Court ladies gave her the cold shoulder, she was occasionally asked to dinner.

As for the mountainous countryside, it was inspiriting. The brigands were most congenial spirits, real sportsmen and aristocrats, who had never so much as heard of this damned democracy, and had no prejudices about their daughters. The valleys were pretty, so were some of the peasantesses; and he romped with everyone on *fête*-days in the villages. He did this with the more gusto because all the Court functionaries made him yawn. The officials were pompous and presumed to teach him. Their wives and daughters were odious, turning up such noses as admitted of that operation at his hail-fellow-well-met ways, and maliciously regretting the good old rule of easily pleased despots.

It must not be supposed that the new King was only a *roi fainéant*. He had been told that democracy required him to be the fountain of honour. So when the President of the Parliament submitted the annual list, he not only made some objections on the score of public service, but he also took the initiative. It had so happened that a fat little man—an official of the Royal Museum—had been asked to dinner on the preceding night and had made himself extremely agreeable by telling excellent stories and retailing amiable art scandals. The King at once suggested that Art must be recognized, and proposed his guest as the fit recipient of a marquisate. But unfortunately the King, being a newcomer, had not the memory

of kings by profession. For the life of him he could not remember the name—only the figure. So he said, "Make the fat little man from the new Royal Museum a marquis." Whereat the parliamentary President bowed and smiled: *he* had a very fat nephew also in the same institution. The fat nephew, therefore, became a marquis. The King laughed when the mistake was brought home to him, and added his own favourite to the list. What did it matter if there were two plump marquises instead of one? And he made it clear also that he could initiate a policy.

Apart from the brigands and the peasants, there had been much unemployment—a crying evil. The King again sent for the President. "Look here, Mr. President," he urged, "we must find some means of remedying unemployment. Trade is bad, and the universal doles that you have proposed subtract from our resources without multiplying our revenue. A sovereign idea has occurred to me—an idea opposed, it is true, to all my prejudices, and, if acted on, of course, only a temporary expedient. Let us introduce Prohibition."

"Prohibition, sir!" ejaculated the President. "With great respect, why spread typhoid through the land? You know how bad our water is."

"I never drink it," replied the King, "but I will tell you what I imagine that Prohibition will effect. It will multiply employment tenfold. Listen, Mr. President. If we prohibit alcohol under the pretext of idealism, we must keep an immense staff of extra police and excise officers, all of whom will be highly bribeable, for nobody, if he knows it, is going to be deprived of liquor. Nor does this complete the trade advantage. Thousands will smuggle alcohol into our realm, and gold will pour into our coffers. The sweet and mineral water trades, too, will hum. So unemployment will end." The President took an hour to perceive the point, but at last its pertinence was clear. Would that the King had been able to effect his purpose, but, alas, incidents were brewing that entirely forbade any high-grade reform. The half-Crown itself was to be endangered.

Things came to a head when, in a defiant moment, he appointed one of the best-bred and best-looking daughters of the chief brigand to be the intendant of his household. The whole Court "struck" on this outrage. The King retorted by a "lock-out," and replaced them by the most

refined tradesmen and peasants. Had he not been specially instructed to be ultra-democratic? And, moreover, practically, it made no difference, for his ex-Master of the Ceremonies had himself been known to spit upon the floor. "No difference!" Ha, ha, he had forgotten Lugano. And, besides, the promoted brigand's daughter disclosed something which much amazed him.

To reveal the last factor first. Hitherto the new King had fancied himself supremely popular. Hitherto he had implicitly followed his preceptor's prescription. But, in the suavest manner, this brigand's offspring one day sadly undeceived him.

"Sire," she said, "all the brigands adore you. They recognize a man of kindred instincts and breeding. But it is my duty to make you aware that these base peasants are playing the hypocrite. Though they appear to welcome the familiarity of your visits, they really despise them. They do not respect a king who demeans himself by dancing with field-labourers' daughters and never awes them, even if it be only by a smile. They prefer one whom they can worship at a distance, whom they can mythologize as a god (this was not her word but her meaning) and whom they cannot see at close quarters. You have often told me, sire, that in these days monarchs must be democrats of whom we brigands never heard till now. And you have been gracious enough to explain to me that this democracy means no rank, no class, and very little discipline. If so, democracy is a crime. If you cannot lead, you go under. And if you go under, the country follows you, because someone else will supplant you in defiance of a democracy that fights against nature. Only in one respect, sire, do we, brigands immemorial, share in the democratic theory. We believe in the occasional transference of property. But we believe in it as gentlemen and ladies with a code of honour. All must be done with discrimination and at our own great risk, for we recognize that laws must exist, even if they be broken. You know full well, sire, that I, for instance, who adore you, would scorn to cheat you of a farthing, but in the case of a mean miser like some of the lowest-born farmers and some of the greediest shopkeepers, I, if a crisis arose, should have no scruple in abetting my distinguished and honoured father in his depredations. In thus daring, sire, to reveal realities instead of the smooth lip-service which

this accursed peasantry accords, need I say to the King whom I worship that I have only his prolonged welfare in view? Once again I say, as if, sire, it were my last word, 'Beware of the peasants.'"

And now let us return to Boris. His father's elevation by no means disconcerted the son in his inveterate plots for sowing anarchy broadcast. At one of the countless international conclaves convened in the Brighton of the Ticino lake, he illustrated by every means in his power that an anarchist is your sole true individualist. Laws and regulations only stunt the human stature. Away with them! Look at his wretched father who had become a king merely because he was a fatuous figure-head. And the king of what?—of a place that was really a General. Here at least was a region (for it was not a nation) ripe for a first-class tyrannical anarchy.

The peasants, he learned from each secret informant, looked down on his miserable progenitor as a time-serving sycophant who found his pastime in blowing the bubbles of an outworn and feeble democracy—a term that was both neutral and suicidal. Nobody was a democrat at heart except the political dwarfs who had vainly succeeded the giants.

In due course, when the moment was ripe, they must be ousted by supermen. A loud cry of "Hear, hear," greeted this logical outburst from the middle of the frescoed chamber which had once belonged to a mediæval potentate. A small wiry figure arose to make a speech which disclosed the facts which the lady had impressed on the King. And, further, he proved from documents in his possession that the brigands themselves, if justly rewarded, would also join in a revolt against the democratic régime. These fine freebooters were militarist to the core and had taken neither to company-promoting nor hotel-keeping as so many of their degenerate fellowship had done in other countries. He knew that in their mountains were gold mines of great value and that some of these brigands were willing to work them. Of course, in the process, they must be guarded by armed troops which the speaker could supply so as to make sure that the treasure should be unequally divided. But, this being so, success was certain. Meanwhile, let them concoct a practical plan and seize the territory after insidiously discontenting the people. The King (whom he knew) would be the first to strike and retire on a dole, cheerfully accorded by all who disbelieved that the many meant much.

He handed up his card on which was inscribed the name of General O'Pliff.

Thus the lame foot of Nemesis had at last caught up the framers of that inept and insulting treaty. Long had the General brooded on revenge, and here he had ultimately found it. The ball was at his feet. Boris, who was merely a declaimer and never a leader, jumped at the idea. The rest was left to the General, who persuaded the fool that he would be the first tyrant of a duly anarchized state which had lately proved little else but the illegitimate, abortive offspring of a random compact.

This is not a story, but a sketch, and perhaps an allegory. It were needless to recount the steps whereby after many adventures General O'Pliff sent Prince Plotz, with whom he shook hands immediately after his abdication, back to Switzerland—soon to be exchanged for Monaco. The doughty O'Pliff, after exiling Boris, ruled the realm misnamed after him to the blank consternation of the impotent politicians. The fault was laid by them entirely on the shoulders of capitalists, who had exploited gold mines to the detriment of democracy. But you and I, dear reader, know better, and General O'Pliff knows best of all. He has just been deposed by the brigand-chieftain, and the thirtieth International Conference has been summoned to meet at Monte Carlo, with the result (on the principle of preaching but never practising " self-determination ") of a bloody civil war. It is unlikely that much more will be heard of a ruler for Pliff, since that realm has been well-nigh depopulated. " Vogue la galère." " Reconstruction " and Destruction are not incompatible.

XV.—THE NEW NEWSPAPER

THE pictureless old-fogey Press was flat.
In a twinkling I transformed it to another.
Do but look upon this picture and on that,
As good Hamlet once admonished his bad mother.

My photographers give libels on the living and the dead.
I get earthquakes and eclipses from an airship overhead.
Excavations come, eruptions, wrecks with devastating gales.
I depict old foreign premiers, and our boylike Prince of Wales.
I portray the newest ruffian—of an accident he died
While conversing on a platform, with a chaplain by his side.
I have portraits of Divorcées and provincial Mayors—a store.
My obituaries celebrate nonentities galore.
Nothing stops me, so I stop not : I delineate the King ;
Scrutinizing Mrs. Brownsmith's newborn twins like anything.
And whenever kind princesses drive to open a bazaar,
There am I, and so by proxy and by consequence, *you* are.
Thus every day in every way I lend events an aureole.
And every way on every day grows more and more pictorial.

None ever need to read my long reports
Which, accountably, valises now instead line.
You can gather information of all sorts
In a snapshot from the corresponding headline.

Our " Sensations," " Situations Grave," will never faint or fail,
Nor " Amazing Scenes " which Shakespeare means by " Very like a whale."
While " The Crash's " ambiguity—dissyllable sublime—
Has been known to do a pretty lot of business in its time.
Yet alliterative artists now are most our boast and pride,
With " Brides Bigamous " or " Dopers by Detective-Dogs Defied,"

And " Manx Mystery-Melodrama : Mother's Malice : Matricide,"
But foreseeing is foreknowing. New ideas, if highly paid,
Will set wider sources flowing of alliterative aid—
Will enlist it for test-matches and our stock-exchange review,
For the racecourse, for the Law Courts, yes, and criticism too.
Oh, " A Noggin in a Nutshell " is the maxim we pursue.
So every day in every way fresh progress seems effective,
And every way on every day marks *linear* perspective.

And I trust it may no sacrilege be found
On the lips of me, a mere Victorian Vandal,
If with vehemence I dare a strain to sound
Of Sir Peter in our modern School for Scandal.

Why enact Grand Guignol dramas of debasement night by night ?
Why with cinematic cocktails whet degraded appetite ?
Why be owl and ghoul at once—the midnight bird that shrieks and glooms,
And the grabber of putridities from desecrated tombs ?
Why to comedies turn tragedies of violent and vile ?
Why surrender to the sinister your lime-lit domicile ?
Why gloat over mock-heroics ? Why hysterically gloze
The erotics of Neurotics with the pathos of a pose ?
Curiosity ! Publicity ! Ye breed the ills ye feed.
Your soft " human document " attunes the most inhuman deed,
And should archives fail the well-worn tale, some registrar of ruin,
Re-inspired by Mephistopheles, concocts and puts one new in !
(Re-continued, see page twenty-three and column twenty-two in)
Thus every day, where'er you stray, prompt scavengers are active.
And every way on every day shows refuse more attractive.

Is there left of shrinking privacy a shred ?
There your interviewer rushes, its invader ;
Rushes in where printers' angels fear to tread,
Rushes in, the free-and-easiest free-trader.

He pursues the vexed Prime Minister at helpless "Number Ten,"
And informs you how he pushed to get some tea for Lady Gwen.
He pursues the willing actress—"leading boy" in "Jack and Gill."
Long she yearned to play Ophelia, yet Burlesque enslaves her still.
She is reading to her mother in their quiet little nook:
If not Shakespeare, then the Bible is assuredly her book.—
He pursues the politician, the twelfth congress he attends,
And extracts illumination from his valet's finest friends.
He pursues each climbing hostess whom it never, never shocks
To enumerate the titles and the viands and the frocks.
He pursues the crossing-sweeper whose first book has made his name—
"Sweepings," epoch-making volume! Yes, it swept him into fame.
So every day in every way becomes more interview-ish,
And every way on every day completely more Who's Who-ish.

Charity is due to the living as well as to the dead. We must remember benefits as well as abuses, and the modern journal certainly enlivens us with much more about much more than its predecessors could ever hope to do. It is pre-eminently more wide-awake, and this quality is infectious. I like to think of some of our Dailies and Weeklies as living beings. There is one of the latter that seems to recall a bishop's widow dwelling in strict retirement not far from the Cathedral precincts. It shows the same width of view united to the same bright other-worldliness. Her old gossips continue to enjoy her secluded tea-table and to give her an authorized version of the wicked world outside, over which she moralizes in piercing platitudes. With another admirable periodical I have only one fault to find—that it sparkles like a needle in a hay-bundle of illustrated advertisements. Sometimes, so thick is its inclosure that the sharp point is hard to find. Or, to repeat Sheridan's metaphor, it "meanders in a meadow of margin," and the meadow hides the rivulet.

Of the Dailies I will make bold to single out only three embodiments. First and foremost, there is Jupiter undergoing a rest-cure. His thunder has been laid aside by medical order, and, of course, he has been forced to forego all

those disguises under which the divine Don Juan used to woo so many classical maidens to his protecting arms. He can think of no one now but Juno, and any discordant fact that might offend her is righteously and rigorously excluded from the tottering columns against which Æsculapius prescribes that he should lean. Nothing is to disturb his perfect repose. He is, however, allowed several pages to attend him during convalescence; the nimblest appears to be Ganymede, who gives him the theatrical intelligence. He has lost all truck with Pallas Athene and her literary judgment which was considered over-stimulating for his nerves, but he can still chat with the Olympian blue-stockings who, it would seem, derive all their knowledge of any subject from the particular book, out of which, in hushed tones and epitomized sentences, they read him safely to sleep.

All this, of course, is only an episode—a parenthesis that will end when he resumes his natural vigour. Meanwhile, he is permitted to indulge in a voluminous correspondence signed with the conventional names. These not only act as additional sedatives, but are gradually restoring his native self-confidence.

Then there is another powerful journal which incarnates the Man in the Street—that mysterious person of whom we hear so much and see so little. He views everything from the standpoint of desires rather than of needs, and this accounts for his strong blend of sense and sensibility. Everyone is crying so often for the moon that there are not moons enough to go round. Everyone fervently believes that all who sit in a third-class railway-carriage are "equal," which is as much as to assert that neighbourhood is the test of equality. Yet the strong, garrulous being whom earthquakes leave unmoved is the same as he whose indignation gushes tears over a crushed black-beetle. The amusements-tax worries him, but, wisely, he consoles himself with golf and cheap seaside resorts. He retains all the exuberance of youth chastened by the sobriety of confirmed middle age, and his wisdom has ripened from intuition rather than study. Always he walks in the middle of the road, however dangerous the traffic may be. His profound commonsense is the safest guide, though sometimes it does not discern whither it will lead him. His tolerance is a byword and his worth untarnished. He is British to the core, but he sometimes over-applies his instinct for compromise in politics to the spheres of Art and Letters. And, lastly, there is a paper

that comes to me in the shape of a betting Baptist, a rare and refreshing combination. He is a non-alcoholist by dogma, but by predilection a spectacular sportsman, for he does not sport himself. I could say more but desist, as I would not for worlds give an unmeant umbrage to any of my judges and my betters. One short sentence, however, may be added. Our modern newspaper throbs with a pity that is often misplaced. Its humanitarianisms respond to those of a crowd which too often bemoans a sensational young murderer but is charier of compassion for his dismembered prey.

XVI.—SOME NEW NOVELISTS

Proem

When the harp-string is broken
  Young melody dies.
When the last word is spoken
  What song can arise ?

When the heart-strings are shattered
  And Life out of tune,
All the sweet things lie scattered
  Beneath the pale moon.

Ah, we smile at vagaries
  That sicknesses are !
But our sigh and our prayer is,
  God heal us from War !

EXAMPLES

(1)

" Horace locked her in his Herculean arms,
  Molten flames were the volcanoes of his kisses."
This, believe me, Mr. Sichel, is what charms
  Southsea sirens and the sub-suburban Misses.
" Doris sucked the deadly venom from the wound
  Of her chivalrous deliverer and saviour "—
So you see that Horace must not be impugned
  For his violent, unusual behaviour.

" All this happens in the backwoods and a hut,
Or on prairies in a wigwam the remotest,
Or localities like Kandahar and Kut,
Where no Puritan could ever raise a protest.
It is healthy, it is wealthy, it is wise ;
So if publishers should ever you importune
To embark on fiction, do as I advise :
Stick to Love—and you may make a little fortune."

(2)

Lo ! an absolutely homespun pixy-story
Of some runagates, Bohemian past compare—
All are wayward clouds that yet reflect a glory,
All are lawless, yet their loyalty is rare.
Their strange father, a past-master of eloping,
Brings them up—or rather down—without a thought,
And yet somehow you are positively hoping
Each will do as ne'er a decent daughter ought.
They are music without morals, true to Nature,
So impulsive in their every fit and start,
That you need no academic nomenclature
To believe them and receive them in your heart.

(3)

On the hard road she sat and sobbed.
Papa, of course, was most ungrateful.
Stayless she was : her hair was bobbed,
Her ecstasies were sad and fateful.
She yearned to marry Mr. C.,
A rolling stone without subsistence.
Papa, of course, repeated " D——
I'll see him at a sanguine distance."

She sprang from famous families
From Agincourt to Ramillies,
Yet there it was : she sat and sobbed,
Sprawling along the hard high road.
She might have been a savage robbed
Anigh Stonehenge, tattooed with wode—
Yet Mr. C.
Won L.S.D.
And poor papa was balked and blowed.

(4)

Hard-hearted parents form my game,
And " sobstuff " meek my raw material,
Soon manufactured into shame.
And tribal ties
Of triple size
I love to melodramatize
In lengths that better suit a serial.
Are children always innocent,
All fathers Herod-Antipases
Who sweep us dry
Of Infantry ?—
Are strikers all of pure intent,
And all their masters knaves or asses ?
Are all " respectables " so vile
In their Capitalist exertions ?—
And why, Sir Preacher, is your style
Diffuse and loose as your assertions ?

———

(5)

The instrument I most prefer
Is still the sex-triangle,
Where t'other one meets him and her
In alternating tangle.
Sometimes this haps in Cabarets
Before a jazz-and-buzz band.
I find it generally pays
To blackguardize the husband.
Conduct by canons new I test.
The female's aye the victim.
Of males the t'other seems the best
So far as I depict him.
Or if two women—each a cad—
And one man make the picture,
The male is very, very bad,
The ladies void of stricture.

(6)

My vocation is a realistic Art,
Its profession, by impression to impart
The thin post-degeneration of the heart
  In the nerve-bedfuddled Gondamere and Elsie,
Who with all their sloppiest friends
Finish cigarettish ends
  And a pipe or two in studios at Chelsea.
There they sit upon the floor
In a garb unworn before
  By æsthetical, poetical carousers.
There are Mænads, too, I ween—
Students of the inbetween—
  Who affect Constantinople in their trousers.

Oh, the daze of their discourses—
On the birthright of divorces ;
On " Complexes," on the Sexes,
On the newest Art-annexes ;
On Augustus John's pervadence,
On Augustus John's decadence ;
On the colouring Tusseaudish
That is ceasing to be modish ;
On the night-houses, and places ;
Of nude songs and tinted faces ;
On the Tango, and the question
Of its auto-sub-suggestion !

It would capture you to hear them through the door.
And especially to hear
Elsie and her Gondamere
On the claims of *felo-de-se,*
If a genius feels uneasy
At his blank apotheosis as a bore—
So on these I spin romances
About suicides at dances,
As they sit in Turkish trousers on the floor.

(7)

There was once a young virgin of virtue
So intense that its impact would hurt you.
She would wear a Red Bonnet *
With Black Beetles on it :
Likewise ditto her sash on,
To prove how her passion
Contraverted like blazes her virtue.
Though her tinder was brittle,
Not the tiniest tittle
Could collapse of such passionate virtue.

But one day, if well on the alert, you
Might have marked this example of virtue
With her beetliest bonnet and skirt—you,
I repeat, might have seen,
This poor Tragedy-Queen,
In a forest of Fate
Drive her autocar straight
Into oaks that would wholly subvert you,
That would wholly subvert for a cert you.—
Oh, the wonderment of it !
Whom and what *could* it profit ?—
A solution might over-exert you.

---

(8)

Here is one who has the world's end at his fingers.
His frivolities are constantly profound :
If at moments over-impudence malingers,
It is merely to refresh you on his round.
Something vocal he will make you of a dumb thing.
He discovers each uncommon commonplace.
Out of nothing he creates a subtle something
And will grace, by humoresquing it, disgrace !

* For the benefit of the antiquarian it may be stated that the author is aware that bonnets (like the Tango) are old-fashioned. Only the exigencies of rhyme can justify their use here as an alternative for hats.

(9)

I can revel thrice a year
In the dreariest didactics
All my solecisms veer
To pretended prophylactics.
I reveal the stalest chance
Through a socialistic science.
And my sciolist advance
Counterfeits a babe's defiance.
Yet the Bleaters call me bright,
And they feign that flares illumine
An infinity of night,
Which are only crude bitumen.

(10)

" I beseech you, admire my trade,
Word-inversion the best of my stocks is.
I've the largest selection yet made
Of invertebrate, set paradoxes.
But my wit has a turbulent twist,
Satirizing the world to upset it ;
It is sexless, and so, an it list,
It may plunge you in quagmires—Let it !
It wears Jaeger, eats nuts, yet its term
International—oft you have met it—
Is as follows : ' The earliest worm
Will pick up the bird '—*if* it can get it."

(11)

Should you like the News of Newgate, you will find it here in folios.
There's polygamy and bigamy and criminal imbroglios.
There is nothing in the nether-world, with all its gruesome capers,
Irrelevant. I need not say I cull it from the papers.
My detectives are the newest kind, the guilty-never-finding ;
You behold one peering through a blind, in colours, on the binding.
Stale Gaboriau pales beside me ; Wilkie C. boasts no survival.
In my histories of Mysteries I reign without a rival.
So in each affair your slightest hair will stand on end in panic,
As I journey snugly east and south in company Satanic,
For my crooks are all romantics, and my plots are all organic.

(12)

If you mean, dear Ann, to choose an
" Introspective " book—with " views," Ann—
" The Self-consciousness of Susan "
Is a novel indispensable for you.
'Tis a " Diary of Feeling "
So acutely self-revealing
That its tables, chairs, and ceiling
Do not count except as influencing Sue.

But the furniture she prizes
And congenitally eyes is
Every mirror of all sizes
Which reflects the measured cult of Self divine.
Nothing else that she possesses
More the Confessor expresses—
A Confessional that blesses
The adorer, the absolver, and the shrine.

All her trifling peccadilloes
She supports on moral pillows.
All her virtues march twelve kilos
To her tarradiddles' paltry one or two.
To-day's rhapsodies on heroes
Who make love to her at Ciro's,
Soon become tirades *v.* Neros
Who eventually are bored to tears with Sue.

From the first her girlish tact shone
Through analysis not action.
This, she felt, was her attraction.
Long she analysed why ever she was born.
Next, when turned of age, her wonder
Was if wedlock were a blunder ;
And, when married, if, asunder,
She could study Self more freely night and morn.

I must not omit to mention
That her bridal showed abstention
From the vanities that outwardly adorn.
She was more concerned with Rousseau
Than her silly wedding-trousseau :
On her wedding-day she loved to look forlorn.

When divorced (she ran the courses
Of two much-revolved divorces)
Death encouraged her resources
Of self-pageantry to make a nobler close.
She debated if cremation,
After feigned annihilation
At a crowded railway station,
Were her consciousest salvation—
Or a " Sea-change " (*vide* Shakespeare)—which she chose.

---

(13)

Cupid and Psyche

(*New Style*)

When widows who at forty-five
Seem somehow thirty only,
And musical and much alive,
Attract a youth in haste to wive
Because he feels so lonely ;
And when the lady hides away
A daughter spliced and happy—
Some psychological display
Is surely on the *tapis*.

A modern version here behold
Of Psyche and her Cupid.
Of Cupid young and Psyche old,
And each divinely stupid ;
Yet both so deftly self-deceived
And mutually befriending,
That every reader sighs relieved
To greet a happy ending.

(14)

TRANSATLANTICA

(*A Suggestion*)

Oh, I would not be an heiress
For the wealth of the Canaries,
  Fortune-hunters would besiege me by the score,
Which might cause a fearful deadlock
Till in self-defence and wedlock
  I espoused a starving artist and a bore.
But before my fancy picked him
I should first become the victim
  Of unbearable political intrigue.
I should roam dispatched on missions
For all sorts of Prohibitions
  To the Vatican, the Soviet, and the League.
They would pet me, then forget me,
Which would finally upset me,
  Spying villains would encompass me with spite.
I should mix in shameful shindies—
For the wealth of all the Indies,
  Please don't make me out an heiress when you write.

---

(15)

AFTERMATH

A drop of ink
  A goose's wing,
Can save or sink,
  Can shriek or sing ;
All bodes can bring
  That men befall—
White is the wing,
  And black the gall.

Still Becky's luring voice can call ;
  Still Uncle Toby sheds a Spring ;
And Nell, and faithful Bede enthral
  The votaries of suffering.
Keen Voltaire's venom yet can sting,
And Rousseau's tears undo a king,
  Swift's levin-satire still appal
  The dwarfs who mock and rail and brawl.

The written thing
  Could fate forestall
On banqueting
  Belshazzar's wall;
The knell could ring
  For Cæsar's pall—
By words we cling,
  Or soar or crawl.

So was it in remote Peking,
With bards in the far days of Ming;
  Of Rameses, of heroes all,
Trojan or Greek who dared to fling
  Their souls to Fame, to funeral
Their clay. Thersites cannot maul
  Renown's eternal blossoming
In Homer's garden. So with Gaul
  It fares, and Britain. White the wing
That bears them to high festival,
  And black the gibes of Envy small.

It gives to think,
  This goose's wing,
That drop of ink.
  The words they string
In hasty scrawl
  A world may swing,
And wreck us all.

In thus venturing to ridicule a few tantrums of recent fiction, I recognize to the full both the realism and romance that distinguish its higher flights. I would not for one moment belittle its wide horizon or its expressive power. There never was a time when nature and human nature were so vividly interwoven in mutual interpretation, or when the best examples proved more signal. But the drama now too often follows the deranging or the decadent novel, and we may yet live to see a play the first scene of which is laid in a public lavatory, and the last in a pauper lunatic asylum. And yet fiction is now ever so much nearer to all sorts and conditions of people and their implications than it used to be, and there is much less of still-life in it.

We think more, too, of the picture than the frame. Yet at the same time we are over-confronted with abnormal excrescences, with people and things outside the health of life. In these deathly beings there is no permanent vitality. But surely, as I have already said, the touchstone of great fiction is that its characters become immortal. We know them and often live with them much more than with many of our neighbours. They are with us, and in us, and in each successive generation they fly from mouth to mouth.

Of how many nowadays, for all their speed and facility, does the supreme test hold good? Time will doubtless show. One thing, however, is certain. We are now being deluged with novels, and novels largely written from a feminine outlook. This is a reaction against virility which assuredly will pass after influencing a robuster fiction in the future. But the present huge influx of readers must at all events be good for trade, for there are now almost as many publishers as public-houses.

XVII.—THE NEW SOCIETY

It is the speed of modern mechanisms and the ferment of sharp vicissitudes that have transformed Society from an oligarchy into a menagerie, and have deformed it into an ill assortment of the Mob and the Millionaire. It needs no historian to prove that the New Rich have been always with us, that "New Men and Old Acres" are a constant factor. Yet of old the parvenu soon became the *bienvenu*; he walked easily in his new garb and conformed to tradition. Tradition is now fast vanishing together with the supremacy of home, but as yet no new tradition has replaced it. Restaurant-life is not yet a tradition, the diffused itch for excitement is not yet an institution, but Society has lost all its compactness. It is a loose, incoherent, inorganic assemblage of atoms that sprawl a full length in the picture-papers. The monotony—with dignity—of the old Society has been succeeded by the jazz-toned impudence of the new. I do not say that this may not have some redeeming features, for young impertinence is rarely a bore, sometimes it has a savour, nor do I deny that some diffusion of a better kind may become a benefit or that its present pulpiness and tartness are more than a passing phase. We live at a moment of much small change and few five-pound notes in every department of national life. But our gold basis may still be restored, however it may be distributed. Still the fact remains that Society used to have a voice, that its voice was, in the main, respected, whereas nowadays its voices are so many, so harsh and clamorous, that they form a noise. Once women could be put to the blush: they are now put to the rouge. This—though on a miniature scale—also happened in the latter eighteenth century. But now the few old or great families choose not to be so hardened, deafened, or dazzled, and they live aloof.

Of the newcomers, few seem to know why they are there. Of the rest it may be said that they ignore Society altogether. The millionaire who was rebuked for forgetting a great invitation, and retorted "I wasn't 'ungry," seems almost old-fashioned now that every class is desperately "'ungry," and that the lowest sets the tune.

That other story of the artless, self-made guest who, on learning that the name of the young lady he was to take in to dinner was "Ramsbotham," replied, "Come, now, you are pulling my leg," is perhaps less inapposite. For this is no more an age of conversation than it is of correspondence as an art. But it is an age of dancing as an art, though not perhaps as a fine art. This holds good of old and young alike, of high and low, by night and day. Without dancing where are you, in Society or outside it? Fox-trot has vanquished jog-trot while it has hampered conversation. As a young man lately observed to his partner, "Please don't talk to me; we are here to dance." Moreover, where does economy enter? I wonder whether certain grand announcements of coming balls followed by an intimation that, unavoidably, and for family reasons, the function has been postponed may sometimes be due to the pinch of the purse?

A fresh factor may be added, though I will not dwell on it. Much more sex-consciousness—shall we call it?—underlies the present Society than of old. True, of yore mothers gave dances with a purposed side-glance at the marriage market, but that is not quite what I mean. The prevalent and wholesome comradeship between girls and boys occasionally has its morbid abuses.

As for the disappearance of chaperonage (save in the cases where daughters may chaperone mothers, or even grandmothers, for all that I know) there is nothing to regret here. It was the homage that prudery paid to virtue. What is to be regretted is the dislocation of home, arising partly from restlessness and the constant chase after change, partly from the rage for independence. The militance of the motor, that highroad Herod, is another deranger of home. It can also prove its invader. By eliminating distance it empowers your worst friends to swoop down upon you at the most awkward moments and to claim a luncheon or a dinner. But on occasion it can also kill or maim your very best friends.

Nor can one forget that owing to the dearth of servants and

the death of service, exorbitant taxes, dwindling incomes, the rage for roaming and the cost of living, comparatively few can afford to give their parties, or even to exist, on the hearth. Many a poor spinster or bachelor has to flit from one foreign hotel to another while the continental exchanges are in their favour. Many a young war-widow has been left virtually homeless and temperamentally helpless. There is still too much fending for self and too little self-respect. And so it will happen that when the prodigal returns to a distressed domesticity, he or she finds a calf far from fatted to welcome them. In fine, Society, like so much else, grows daily less private. Its publicities are loud and blatant. It is less a scene of converse than a variety-show. In several respects it bears a resemblance to the decayed Society of declining Rome, with the same *penchants* for the big-little, for thrills, for gladiators, and, in its looser sections, for "all the world and someone else's wife." It is often extravagant. It adores glitter and the golden or rolled-golden calf. It tends to be indiscriminate and undistinguished, thereby pandering to the democratic demand for titles and titillations.

With many fine and unobserved exceptions—for never in better circles was there more public-spirited, unselfish social service, service, too, half-resented by its beneficiaries—you need powerful eyeglasses to recognize or appreciate a lady or a gentleman, though I have seen them pushing perambulators on Sunday in the Park or Kensington Gardens. All honour be theirs! But I am speaking of Society as it is presented to the multitude. It is a slough, not a society, and it won't go home till morning. By the same token, too, it may be likened to those cosmopolitan, luxurious transatlantic steamers teeming with every mechanical device for surfeit or exercise, and thronged with passengers who recall the scriptural catalogue of the polyglot proselytes on the first Whit-Sunday.

Or it may be compared to a casual ward—an extremely casual one—which accounts for the many social casualties now in vogue. There is, too, a sort of vulgar gentility—as the shop-assistants are forward in showing you. But though often there is manner, how seldom in any class do we meet with manners, the tact both of the head and the heart. As for the fashions, which are not so much more *outré* than they were in 1804, I will only say this, "Shingles" used to be a disease —it is now a coiffure.

And, lastly, is this Society less dull than its predecessor which was tame out of decorum? Riot is not lively. Sometimes it may seem so, but you must be in the mood, and a series of such moods is more wearing and monotonous than Mrs. Grundy of blessed memory, who surely must have expired at Cheltenham. Who will publish her autobiography? or her epitaph:

> "Mrs. Grundy rests here. One against whose direction
> Very few dared to rise, is denied resurrection"?

So much by way of prologue or sermon. Few individual types can be here submitted, though many more will be remembered. Let me open with a gracious example of the transition period.

The Duchess of Roxeth grows older gracefully. She extends a shelter to all who have suffered and beckons them to refreshment under it. She herself has known and suffered much. Her perceptive mind is open to everyone and everything that in any degree merits recognition. She never considers herself, always she studies others. She seems ever young, not by the pretence but by the presence of invincible youth. She consoles by listening more than by utterance, and she inspires by silence rather than by words. She owns the calm which modernity forbids, but her reserve is more eloquent than the vapid gushes of the young generation. She never exclaims "too sweet" or "such a darling."

She shows that charity of the heart which beareth all things, and that clarity of the mind that cannot be hoodwinked. She is not rich, but there is no worldly gift that she covets. She gives far more than she receives. In her company both the old and the young feel younger. "To know her is a liberal education." That fine but hackneyed sentence—written, be it marked, not by Steele, to whom it is attributed, but by Congreve—suits her better than any other. Ah, if only the newest Society, which she tolerates with a touch of sadness, were more like her! But then it would not be so "smart." Do not we like to discover what we do not exactly want? Columbus discovered America, Oxford has lately discovered the new trousers, and New York the New Society, an amalgam of materialist mechanics, a throng dominated by restive and festive women ambitious of advertisement.

Mrs. Palamant is of this aspiring order. Nobody quite knows

her origin, for she has several birthplaces—her last *provenance*, when she first surprised what used to be called the Season, was Canada. She is a handsome widow with a pretty and sprightly daughter who looks like her elder sister. What Mr. Palamant was no history records; he is supposed to have been something in the Colonies. Somehow in a flash here his widow was, palatially and munificently installed in Belton House. Within a month of her arrival some fairy-wand presented her with two country-houses, one in a hunting county, the other in Scotland. She already owned a villa near Beaulieu, another on the Lake of Como, and, of course, one of the stateliest old hotels in Paris.

This was very clever of Mrs. Palamant. Every time that she bought some remnant of the *ancien régime* she made acquaintance—and improved it—with its proprietor. So that when she established herself in the land of unmeasured accessibilities, she had acquired a wide good-will. The Marquis de So-and-So was her friend, the dear Marchesa di Qualche Cosa was her intimate. The Countess of Lackland and the Earl of Stoney were her social god-parents. Ostensibly she hinted that her only child's happy settlement in life was her main object—her late husband's dying wish. This achieved, she would sing a *Nunc dimittis*. But destiny works by opposites, and, all unknown to herself, this was not to be the case. The game really lay in the guileful hands of her daughter Medea—so christened after a picture that she had once seen abroad and confused with the appellation "my dear."

Mothers propose, daughters dispose. Medea was a prematurely shrewd strategist, and had resolved to bestow her mother in a second marriage. With Machiavellian art she played on the maternal duplicities. She was tired of being dragged about the Continent and being forced to see things when she longed to live. In London she rebelled against the perpetual clatter and harum-scarum. If she wanted a husband she would find him outside the market. But for her mother a keen study of market conditions was clearly desirable. So perpended and plotted this new, unsentimental, thoroughly-fledged young lady. The "mater" must never guess her designs. She waited to see which of the eligible suitors for her own capable hand might best suit her mother's.

Once in Belton House, Mrs. Palamant soon rallied not a circle, but a semi-globe around her. Nobody whose picture was in the papers, or the Academy, escaped her golden net. Earls,

countesses (the dukes were difficult), lords and ladies (some very much in waiting), diplomatists, statesmen, authors, actors and artists, stars of the cinema, the bluest and the newest blood, all were fêted with profusion. The darling child was her sole care. Nothing was good or bad enough for her delectation. The Belton House parties soon became the craze, and the cost of them would have sufficed to take twopence off the income-tax.

Among the younger desirables was the one duke that at length she had contrived to capture—the Duke of Blackfriars, who had just pulled off his third divorce. Whenever he was there, Medea somehow managed to retire into their winter-garden with the Chancellor of the Exchequer, or a banker in search of employment, for cent-per-centiment fascinated Medea. Mrs. Palamant had her own formula of conversation which was always interrogatory. To the diplomatist she would say: "You are in diplomacy, tell me how you do it?"; to the statesman: "You are a man of public affairs, tell me how do you keep them private?"; to the scribblers: "You are a man or woman of books, tell me, do you square the libraries?"; to the best card-player in London: "Are you the card-man?"; and so forth. Only to the Derby winner did she cease her questions, saying, as she shook hands with him, "My word, you *are* a breather."

And so with her wonted directness she asked the Duke of Blackfriars: "Duke, *you* are the stately homes of England, tell me, do you make them pay?" This pleased the Duke very much. He had already disposed of one of these homes to her (which was the cause of this, his first invitation), and now in strict confidence he disposed of another with the sole reservation of its wrought-iron gates which were reserved for a new restaurant. And then she said, "What do you think of my darling Medea?" To which the Duke answered gallantly and perhaps practically, "I always prefer young mothers to less young daughters."

Policy is the best honesty. Medea managed in a hundred ways to bring this young Duke and her mother together. The Duke told her all about his divorces, his racing stud, his damned creditors and ancestors, his inbred love of plain dealing, and the beastly spirit of the age which was thwarting it. Mrs Palamant was an invaluable adviser because she had no illusions. And so everywhere they very soon became inseparables.

Then Medea, one day, said firmly to her mother: "They are

beginning to talk about you, dear, and your Duke. It is the first step that counts. No woman of your lofty standards can afford to let people *begin* to talk. You can, if you are driven to it, let them *end* by talking about you, but as you know much better than I do, you must never let them begin. You owe it not only to yourself, but also to poor little me to do the right thing. You must marry the Duke, and you must marry him while the iron is hot—you have heard of the Iron Duke—I repeat while the iron is hot. He is quite a good sort, mother, and an eligible stepfather. If I know you, you will ride him on the curb. Marry him. As a rule, there is a way out of everything. You can read it in the Tube stations—' The Way Out.' But from this *impasse* there is no exit for a high-minded and high-spirited creature like your darling self."

So everything, including St. George's, Hanover Square—where lately *The Times* inaccurately recorded that Lady Hamilton was married—was arranged, and Mrs. Palamant, out of maternal piety, became the Duchess of Blackfriars. The wedding took place in Westminster Abbey as a sort of consolation-stakes for the extreme unlikelihood that either of the parties would ever there be buried. And that night it was announced in the papers that " Miss Medea Palamant gave a dinner and a dance afterwards in honour of her mother's wedding. The guests included——." The length of the list required print so minute (lest it should reduce the advertisements) as to prove illegible. It was a rather Bohemian affair on which the framed ancestors of the Belton House family must have frowned. She never quite recovered from the shock—nor did the Duke, who, notwithstanding, has been quiet to ride or drive ever since. Medea clapped her hands and went on the films, where she has been a great success, though in a weak moment she has lately become the wife of an Arctic explorer. The two things sometimes go together.

After this romance it is indeed a descent to give vignettes of the tame Mr. Corn, Sir Algernon Edge, and Miss Biffles. But who will recoil from duty ?

In these affairs there is always a talisman. Mrs. Palamant's was her daughter ; Mr Corn's, his agility ; Sir Algernon Edge's, his hospitable cult of girlhood in the peerage ; that of Miss Biffles, her bridge and jollity. And so Society fulfils herself in many ways.

Mr. Corn, the son of a strict Presbyterian, soon belied his

puritan nurture, though he was never frivolous. A youth with a purpose, he steered all his activities by the compass of success. His University record was brilliant. He went to the Bar (which no social changes can alter) and was brilliant again. Earlier, he distinguished himself in athletics, was for a space a master in a great public school, and ultimately, after a triumph at the Bar, emerged in politics.

Uncertain whether to start as a Liberal or Conservative, he was favoured by the moment and became a Coalitionist—that is someone who was nothing and any one who was something. Hitherto all that he had done—academic, athletic, or forensic—had forwarded self-advertisement. Everyone knew his name. Henceforward he restricted himself to dancing. Terpsichore was his " Open Sesame." So well and indefatigably did he dance that his previous record was eclipsed. Night by night he danced himself into renown. The old patricians took him up, so did the new. Had Noah been equally gifted, he would have been welcomed, but Corn was not Noah. Firm, dry land was his footing, and he knew how to render the dryest land amusing.

He is now on the penultimate rung of the ladder. He is the ideal director of six solid companies, and very soon he will be in the Cabinet. All this has come to him without effort, and by sheer force of will and adaptability. In the old Society it would have taken him years to effect what he has been able to do in a long series of nights. He will probably end as a Chancellor of the Exchequer and the husband of an unprofessional *danseuse* much younger than himself. What his dear old father would have said, I know not. Perhaps it might have been " For pleasure give me Peebles."

Sir Algernon Edge began early and was a minor prophet of his coming greatness. He had inherited a large fortune from a mercantile sire who had been baroneted for making it, and would have been added to the House of Lords had not an earl of high descent acidly observed that in that case he would have no further use for it. The youth proceeded in due course to Eton and Christ Church, where he shone as a gastronomic Amphitryon of the first order, but the wound caused by this insulting loss of a well-earned earldom always rankled beneath his pink, unruffled surface.

Deliberately he founded a club for the express purpose of feasting the golden youth of both sexes. The Epicurean, as it

was called, became a most *recherché* resort, and for ten years of his not too fatiguing existence Sir Algy has made the club his business and profession. He gives almost daily luncheons and dinners to the best-looking daughters enumerated in Debrett, and indeed his own copy of that golden book has been extra illustrated by him with their portraits.

Commoners are sometimes allowed to join the magic circle if they are known or notorious enough to justify their admission. It cannot be concealed that flirtation was also a by-motive or that some of these high-born beauties lent themselves to such an innocent pastime. But Sir Algernon is plain, and though he often proposes—usually after dinner—he is quite safe from being seriously compromised. Indeed, his face is an insurance policy, and often does he thank his stars for some narrow escapes.

There is one firm advantage, however, that he derives from these patrician pursuits. He is recognized as an authority on all matters of aristocratic grade or precedence. Had Oxford ever been enabled to confer such a degree, he would certainly have been made—*honoris causâ*—a Doctor of Debrett. But unfortunately D.D. now signifies a doctorship of doctrines far less interesting to the worldly-wise. So great is his reputation that American mothers freely consult him, and he is always glad to put his great learning not only at their service but at the disposal of the less erudite newspapers, and of their proprietors whenever—as so often happens—they are ennobled.

Of course, several spicy anecdotes might be told of Sir Algy, who is always very solemn when he recounts them in strict confidence to others. I respect that confidence and it shall never be abused. Had I been able to sketch him less in profile gladly would I have done so. But he is a man more of digestion than of action, and his idiosyncrasy is bounded by his hospitalities. You might suppose his course (or courses) to be monotonous, but it is not so. The peerage is being so continually enlarged that he never lacks new and exquisite recruits. One of these days, it may be hoped, his " A Host's Happiness " will appear. It is at present being written for him by his three charming lady-secretaries, all of whom are collaterally related to claimants of peerages in abeyance. It will, indeed, be a delightful volume, rich in recollections of the belles who are worthy of his menus, and of the menus which are worthy of his belles. Nor can I close this

faint record of an extraordinary man without pointing out his truly democratic bias.

Democracy is a champion-snob, and when everyone is ennobled, and the principle of artificial superiority completely established, there will be no more use for that mouth-satisfying name. Meanwhile, Sir Algernon Edge stands among us as a symbol of all that Wordsworth has beautifully comprehended in " High living and plain thinking." I tremble to think what will happen when he passes away. He will be terribly missed by all waiters—not only by those sturdy, humble men for whom you wait at table, but by waiters on wealth, waiters on Providence, and the like. The anthem at his funeral service will surely be " I Waited for the Lord." That has been the genial task of his life.

Miss Biffles illustrates the wholesomer side of our New Society. A legacy was left to her late in life, and she became an old maid no longer, but a new-old maid, which makes all the difference. An old maid used to be a target of fiction and the stage. She grew up in an atmosphere of depression and isolation, unless she was very rich, and then she knew what her sycophants were after. As Byron sings :

> " . . . and passing sweet
> The sudden unexpected death of some old lady."

Whatever the old maid's real character may have been in the early nineteenth century—when Miss Austen and her sister were themselves charming old maids by the measure of that period—she was depicted as prim, meddlesome, and even malicious. She was encircled by cats both animal and human. All her natural affections were at best blunted or parochialized, and indeed those affections were too often withered leaves on the altar of parental despotism. Duty sacrificed her to the whims of a gouty father or a *malade-imaginaire* mother who exacted close attendance on self-indulgence. These maids were forbidden to marry, were (and sometimes are still) sentenced from sheer necessity to become the companions of some terrible old tyrantess.

In the eighteenth century, if its literature mirrors them aright, there were very few nice, old maids. I am speaking of such as lived alone, for Scott depicts a delightful old Quaker maid and her brother in " Red Gauntlet." Looking much later

ahead, we find, it is true, some pleasing old maids in " Cranford," and still onwards one genial and one tragical old maid in the grotesques of Dickens—against all of which, however, must be set Thackeray's forbidding portrait of Miss Crawley in an earlier generation. While the negroes were being emancipated, Wilberforce never gave a thought to the lonely old maids who languished in unparaded chains compared with the " blighted lilies," as Carlyle styled them when Gladstone tiraded against Governor Eyre. How strikingly most of these factors have changed is delicately shown by Mr. Maxwell in his novel of " A Spinster of this Parish," and the grimmer delineation of old maidenhood, when its passions are released, has been handled in the manner of Balzac by Mr. Walpole.

But I am not going to typify the spinster in fiction from Smollett's Tabitha up to date. I am only going to outline how jolly she can be in the person of my Miss Biffles. Till her legacy arrived she was living a pinched and restricted life in a mischief-making village. She did her best, for she was always high-spirited, but there was no getting away from that village. Her father, who had been ruined by his solicitor, was dead; her mother had died broken-hearted. She was an only child and an orphan. Then the War broke out. She shamed the village by her whole-hearted, practical, and truly sympathetic hard work during those three and a half years. The disabled heroes simply worshipped her, for she divined their needs and their hearts with native humour and perception. After the armistice, which she hated as a pedlar's dodge, she removed herself on the strength of the substantial legacy to London, where she rented a small house in a neighbourhood vulgarly described as " An Address." She was well-born and soon attracted many friends to her hospitable home. There all that she dispensed was little and good. She would much rather give a little of the best than a mass of the third-rate, and so it was with her company.

At nigh fifty she had blossomed into being a good bridge-player and, moreover, no dabbler in golf. She soon became popular in the best houses, though she never disdained the worst if gentle honesty dwelled there. She was in " Society," laughing at much of it, scorning the rest, and giving excellent advice in a light-hearted manner to the young fashionables who disdained to put themselves out for anybody, or even to leave cards after a dinner. How unlike was she to her bridge-playing

acquaintance, Miss Snarlby, who lived in a sordid boarding-house, yet turned up her nose at all the good food which she devoured while away both at home and abroad. Also, with an inimitable sniff of scorn, she would brand any average person as "dirt, mere dirt," though she fawned on their betters as "People, *they* are people." But *our* old maid was kindness itself. Her breeziness and large-heartedness invigorated all, and though her life was not over-eventful, her influence for good was a power. At this moment she is the wife of a widower squire who had the good taste and good sense to admire her. So the New-Old Maid has become one of the few grains of salt in the New Society. And while that Society airs a whiff of stephanotis, Miss Biffles is all hawthorn-blossom and wild rose.

I started by comparing this random assemblage to the new and improved music-hall, which, however, I must prefer as being healthier. May I be pardoned if I subjoin a new music-hall song, as I imagine it in this regard, adding afterwards a jinglet on the pleasure, as things go nowadays, of being an innocent bankrupt? There are many other Society types and characters on which I should have liked to dilate, but I must refrain. Space is a jealous mistress, and something must be left to the reader's imagination, if any reader will be found. I feel myself like a most inefficient judge on circuit. There are so many cases to try that I long soon to visit some other assize town where I may be honoured by receiving a brand-new pair of white gloves.

(1) What's On?

(*A Society "Turn"*)

The slumber of Society
  At length is rudely shaken.
Vast orgies of Variety
  The world have overtaken.

Each Music-hall with turns untold
Incites excitement manifold.—
  Frocks to the knees,
  "Go-as-you-please,"
  And "Always follow Folly,"
  Outbreathe our new *haute volée*.

With this refrain
For heart and brain
By Negroes played :
The last new strain
Of serenade :

" What's on to-day, what's on
For revellers of *ton ?*
What ! Nothing new to con ?
No goings on ?—Go on ! "

The race-course with satiety
Bawls " All the losers " daily.
No protest sounds from Piety :
Untaxed, we gamble gaily.

We trebly bet at Newmarket
Without regret or dread of debt.
The " spot " to-day
Is Paramé,
A winner willy-nilly,
Both ways we back the filly.

With this refrain
For heart and brain
By Negroes played—
A sportsman's vain
Fanfaronnade :

" What's on to-day ? What's *bon ?*
What's fifty-five to one ?
What ! Nothing decent on ?
How stumatose ! Go on ! "

Dear Lady Bird, hilarity
Is nothing to your dances.
The sacred cause of Charity
Their fancy-fair enhances.

The Fair are there in fancy-wear
Hellenic goddesses, I swear,
Who well can bear
The sultriest air.—
" Hence loathéd Melancholy,"
Hail jolly midnight Folly ! "

I'm in the vein
For that refrain
The Negro plays
To much champagne
And mayonnaise :

" What's on to-night ? What's on,
Yon damozels of *ton ?* '
Say, proud Hyperion—
' Well, next to nothing *on.*' "

(2) The New Bankrupt

" At last, dear George, I've gone to Court,
You know the Court aforesaid—
'Tis not the King's, nor that resort
Where couples get divorcéd.
But one wherein the Registrar,
A kindly creature, bows and
Affirms that *nil* your Assets are,
" Your Liabils. a thousand.

" *My* bills (as oft in Parliament)
Were passed on their third reading
Without a question—or a cent
For sharks who thrive on bleeding.
The Registrar with waggling head
Me of all blame acquitted
Except extravagance, and said
That fools were oft weak witted.

" I winced at this, made no reply,
And feared a final dressing.
But now I see that bankruptcy
Is in disguise a blessing.
Somehow you never feel your fix,
And there is that within you
Which whispers ' Save for vetoed ticks
The same I shall continue.'

" A Bankrupt's life is calm and gay,
Good friends-in-need provide him
With banknotes for the race or play
And cates to stow inside him.
And though no credit he can get,
Brave heroes who adore him,
Without the faintest fear or fret
Will raise the money for him.

" For banks I care not now a pin,
No duns affront my doorway.
I find no difficulty in
A fishing-trip to Norway.
So, should you wish to shoot the moon
With folderolderido,
File your petition very soon,
Dear George, and do as I do."

XVIII.—THE NEW INVESTOR

After the deep upheavals of the last decade which have made most things new except human nature, the investor has also changed. Formerly there was a sharp margin between investment and speculation. Now it seems mainly a matter of graded risks. The gilt remains merely on the edges of the gilt-edged securities which the convulsions of trade, "sympathetic" strikes, the wars that the peacemakers are preparing, foreign exchanges, and over-inflation of credit may whittle down. Many investments, moreover, of previous high-standing have become *de*vestments. And with incomes diminished by unprecedented taxation the majority of investors, or rather the minority who are able to save anything, are driven to seek the better kind of securities yielding a comparatively high return. In the face of these and many more factors the stock-brokers are also new: demand regulates supply. In old days, before stocks and shares had multiplied like mushrooms or rabbits, their work was not half so hard. Now they are expected to be cosmopolitan specialists, which it is impossible for any single firm to be, or, with a show of foundation, even to pretend to be.

Formerly the investor, usually a portly person of at least middle age, repaired to the office, let us say of Messrs. Slowcombe and Shuregon, which somewhat resembled the waiting-room of a railway station. It was far from being the smart new office with its aromatic garden of young lady typists, telephonists and secretaries that greets us to-day. Indeed, the sole flowers that bloomed in its desert were stocks. A rather seedy old clerk tremulously asked his name, and he was ushered into the presence. "Safety first" was the watchword of Mr. Slowcombe, who welcomed his well-to-do client with an unimpeachable

and hushed air of Consols. Even then, however, if the client wished for something less tiresome, there was an excellent new thing which he could confidently recommend—a first-rate Bank, the liability on the shares of which was merely nominal and might be wholly dismissed in view of the enormous reserve fund.

Of course, he would not suggest anything with liability to ladies, who were always frightened by the name. But for investors like Mr. Crediton—this with a knowing smile—he would call it a windfall; yes, a windfall he would call it. And so after a leisurely conversation about the weather, politics, and the coming budget, added to a gentle reminder of how well those Indian Railway Debentures were doing which he had brought to his client's notice half a year earlier, Mr. Crediton departed, and Mr. Screwly was announced. No fluster, no hurry, and no choice save that between Consols (in what shabby lodgings do those veteran widows now reside?) and the Nova Zembla Bank shares, or a judicious blend of the two which an extreme prudence suggested. The rest was silence.

But now what do we see? The new client enters what looks almost like the Bank of Messrs. Clang, Speed and Puffan. Adjoining this bank—on which, as some wretched Shakespearian punster once remarked, "the wild time lies"—is a suite of the most spick-and-span apartments, to one of which he is conducted by a short-skirted damsel through bustling rows of her typist sisters. Will he kindly wait a few moments; it will not be *very* long before Mr. Clang himself (the inspiration of the firm) will see him. He is at present engaged with an important client, but (with a smile) it will not be very long.

The new client, whom we will call Mr. Wantage, sits down on one of the Chippendale chairs, and admires the good old sporting prints that embellish the walls, also an ancestral oil portrait over the elegant mantelpiece which recalls Charles Surface's great-uncle in the "School for Scandal's" auction scene. Mr. Clang is so busy that over a quarter of an hour elapses, agreeably passed in admiration of the art treasures, the young ladies' hum of lively conversation, and the chimes of the telephone. At length, as some atonement for delay, the head clerk himself, with a Sunday-like solemnity, ushers him into the holy of holies, where Mr. Clang, after a parting injunction to the head clerk, apologizes for delay. His outgoing client had detained

him much longer than he had hoped over a most important affair, involving over a million ; that must be his excuse.

Mr. Clang is the pleasantest of men—or shall we say hosts ? He is a host in himself. The drain on his brain is colossal. He is noted not only for his knowledge but for the goodness of his heart, the speed of his discrimination, and the range of his choice. All is tabulated in his mind, and he keeps the neatest records by him of every good investment under the sun and under par. He knows Mr. Wantage. Like so many in these trying times, he requires high income and good security. He wishes both to live well and to sleep well. Here, for example, is the very thing—indeed, here are two things for which he will vouch. The one is the Universal Electricity Company, which pays excellent dividends. Its reserve fund is not yet as big as it soon will be, because so much of its spare cash is most profitably invested in the business. In confidence, he may add, that in all probability it will ere long be amalgamated with the Superuniversal Company, when a bonus issue of new shares will be distributed.

The other desirable investment is the Gulliver Electric Appliances Company, a new consolidation of three first-rate smaller companies. These new shares can be bought at a discount because their underwriters were " shot " with sixty per cent of the issue—all owing to the plethora of new concerns and the dearness of money. Let Mr. Wantage examine the particulars and excellent auspices and he will see what an opportunity this affords of picking up a good thing. Surely electricity and its implements have an expanding future before them. Mr. Clang is quite right. Tired as he is, he is honestly endeavouring to do his very best for the young client, and Mr. Wantage, who has just changed his broker, goes away the happy possessor of both these gold mines. Each does uncommonly well, and the better they do, the oftener Mr. Wantage dips his hand in the lucky-bag by selling some of his remnants. He is being trained in the system figured by " Out " and " In " as a guide at railway stations and other public buildings.

I am far from blaming this system which, if directed by inner information and careful selection, often prospers. Still less should I in the least blame Mr. Clang, for whom I have the greatest regard and respect. He is a most honourable, able and versatile man, a good friend and a good man of business. So long as that business was smaller—though it was

always big, he was able to bestow undivided attention on the securities which he conscientiously studied and on the clients whom he enriched. But, as might be expected, his operations have been—thanks to his exceptional powers—hugely extended.

It is impossible, with the best will in the world, for one so overworked and so overbeset to devote himself with the same individual interest. You are lucky now if you catch him even for ten minutes. He never spares himself. He is immensely in request and inordinately overworked. He has been thrown together with big controllers of the best class and sometimes he naturally takes their word for the wares which in the best faith he confidently and often warrantably places. His boots have grown too big for him, and he is less a specialist than of old. He has done so much for so many and with a scrutiny so generous that no Mr. Wantage should wax querulous if a few of the many good eggs occasionally become addled. All of us blockheads are proud of Mr. Clang.

Now let us cross the road and invade the office of Messrs. Everton and Toffy, also brokers of the best modern type, men who are rightly honoured. The firm is old and traditional, and their adaptabilities have not submerged their traditions. They are versed specialists. They never recommend anything, but, whatever your demands, they can procure the exactest information available. Save for a solitary lady with a sad voice their staff is entirely masculine. They act for the most important institutions, but they shun all promoters like a pest. They are strict-minded, free-handed intermediaries. In the words of a wine-circular that I have just received, they are " Good old Burgundy, very generous with dark colour and exceedingly fine quality: Cabinet wines: very full in character: corks branded." Their advice, like their growth, is gradual. Should our Mr. Wantage call on them, they will scrupulously point out every advantage and every disadvantage—stretching to a remote future—of the bond, stock or share in question; and the disadvantages, against their own interest they over-emphasize. They discourage incessant changes either of investments or brokers. Especially do they favour things which intrinsically are ever so much better than they appear to the uninitiated. They are not ambitious, and have seldom been mistaken in their forecasts. In a word, they are wiser than they are clever. And they tackle vast amounts as if they were trifles, and your own trifles as if they were

vast amounts. They play the waiting and not the impatient game.

True, the new impulses have not been lost on them, but even these they confessedly seek to restrain as some old grandfather would admonish a wayward grandson. I have never beheld a petticoat in their office: they are afraid of the responsibility and the eventual feminine explosions, should things miss fire. Perhaps an hour in their courts is worth a thousand elsewhere, and it is enchanting to hear them speak of what a chairman of a leading bank told them at luncheon of the company's real "break-up" value. Both they and Mr. Clang are paragon modern instances, touching the two extremes of the new tendencies. The first images the Conservative outlook; the second, the Radical. Of the rest I will say nothing, though, in the mass, under new conditions, I do not believe that any vocation can count more honesty and industry.

But the fault of the lesser fry is that they are incapable of looking forward for more than a fortnight, and as for the great brokers of great banks, their failing (which is really an advertisement of their greatness) seems sometimes to be the passionate habit of buying for you at the highest price and selling at the lowest. And yet they have won such a solid, time-honoured reputation that old ladies flock to them as geese do to a common. It is not their fault. Their transactions are so vast that minute attention is impossible.

And now let us for a moment suppose that a big company —"a good man struggling with adversity," or, to requote from poets, "some strong swimmer in his agony"—has passed its dividend. Our Mr. Wantage repairs, a sadder but no wiser man, to the annual general meeting. The report has pointed out, I generally notice, that the balance-sheet shows "great financial strength," and that in giving no return this year to the investor on his diminished capital, the directors are acting "in the best interest of the shareholders." This, of course, may be the case, but Mr. Wantage, for one, does not appreciate no interest whatever.

The chairman rises and delivers a "statesman-like" speech. He reviews all the circumstances at such length that few can remember one of them, least of all Mr. Wantage. If it had not been for this and that, they would have enjoyed a record year. In spite of everything, it will be noted, they have been able to wipe out the item of "good will" and to write off the

inevitable expenses of the last issue of shares. Looking ahead to future requirements, they propose to carry forward no less than a hundred thousand pounds, but they would be criminal if they dreamed of carrying a single penny back. His voice almost swells in triumph and drops fatness, when he urges that with improved world-conditions, a revival of trade, and a stable Government, the shareholders may anticipate—he will not say more—far better results in the ensuing year.

For the loyal staff, for his anxiously overworked colleagues, no tribute of praise can be adequate. The auditors, too, are splendid fellows, and owing to the lamented death of Lord Pinching, they have chosen his private secretary to fill his place at the usual salary—a choice, he is sure, that all present will applaud. He is glad, very glad, to see such a large attendance this day. And then he moves the resolution ("sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought") that no dividend should be distributed. Would any lady or gentleman like to ask any questions?

An excited spinster, with a reticule protruding papers, immediately arises. She would like to ask so many questions that they are all muddled together. In the main she recalls last year's promises and this year's performance. A furious gentleman—a solicitor—next arises with a sheaf of stormy protests fraught with some side-slaps hinting fraud, and begs to say that ere the meeting closes he will move for a Committee of Inspection to examine the true state of affairs. He is followed by another owning three shares who literally howls with rage. Then the usual calm, impartial gentleman arises who asks questions certain to be met with a favourable answer.

Oil having been thus cast on the troubled waters, the chairman, with a placid smile on his countenance, rises in reply. The lady has quite mistaken the disclosures of the balance-sheet. Really she must calm herself and possess her soul in patience. The two gentlemen must also recognize that, whatever their natural disappointment has been, especially for the proprietor of the three shares, all has been for the best. He lays great stress on every wise word of the oil-pourer. Any more questions? None? He seems almost disappointed at this poor response. Well, then, he will put the resolution to the vote. Now is the solicitor's opportunity. He rises to propose the Committee of Inspection. He abuses everybody and everything. Why the carry-forward, if no dividend has been earned? He will tell them why, and so on. The hubbub of a

Tower of Babel ensues. Nearly everyone gets up in a general tow-row and hardly anyone sits down afterwards. Some order is at length restored by the oil-pourer. With absolute equanimity the chairman calls for a decision. For the solicitor, five; against him a hundred and twenty. The motion is lost, and its movers make a wrathful and hurried exit. The chairman repeats the resolution: "Carried unanimously."

Then one of the oiler's companions springs to his feet, and after juicy compliments to the Board, the staff here and abroad, the auditors and the original promoters of the company, proposes not only a vote of thanks to the chairman for his frank and lucid exposition, but feels sure that all present would wish to show in some fitting fashion their sense of deep gratitude for the way in which, during an exceptional year, every member of the board had strained their utmost energies in grappling so successfully with unprecedented hardships. He therefore proposes the gift of our old friend the diamond inkstand to each. This proposal, duly seconded, is carried by a majority of fifteen, and Mr. Wantage, with many another, departs with inexpressible thanks for such an unpleasant afternoon.

Such is too often the experience of the new investor, who is not allowed in a much and long suffering age to enjoy the peace that passeth understanding. For the moment, I will not follow him elsewhere, but I venture to invoke the Muse for the two subjoined studies of "A New Prospectus" and "The New Money Article." It would be impossible to do justice in prose to themes so subtle and elusive as these. They are realities that must be translated into the realm of fancy and illusion, mirages in the dry desert of hard facts wherein Aristophanes would have revelled. Would that his pen could be mine! Pedestrian as I am, I can only attempt my best, and my best is hopelessly the worst—as in the case of the company meeting just adumbrated.

Of one thing, however, I am sure, however indulgent the reader may be. I shall never be presented with a "diamond inkstand." No resolution will be passed in favour of my bad year. Angry gentlemen may ask me questions which I shall have no chance of contradicting. And I shall receive no dividend till kingdom come. But what are trifles like these to an imperative sense of duty? "Dirt, mere dirt." The auditors are duly re-elected, and the company, unlike my martyred self, is of great financial strength.

(1) A New Prospectus

"The Consolidated Iranian Oil, Metals, and Pearl-Fisheries Company, Limited. Issue of One Million Ordinary Shares of Two Shillings each at Par."

"Ten miles of grand rock-ridden Sand
Confront the Persian Ocean.
Its productivities demand
Unlimited promotion.
The famous firm
Of Turp and Squirm
Has lavished labour on it, and
Exceptional devotion.

"It wells with Oil—accept you must
Statistics undisputed.
New gushers hourly swill the dust
From drill-holes deeply rooted.
We find Bashahr
(See map) so far
The nearest port—which soon we trust
For tonnage will be suited.

"Alluvial Gold, fold over fold,
Abounds, with ease collected,
The workings old of Tin untold
Have just been reconnected.
An ample store
Of Iron-ore,
Where traces teem of iron-mould,
May therefore be expected.

"Under the surf, whose breakers cheer
The gangs of sanguine diggers,
Pearl-oysters, fine of skin and sphere,
In shoals (consult the figures)
Arise to greet
The Diver's feet—
Pearls fair as dawn encounter here
The darkest, happiest niggers.

" We scorn to keep such precious ground
From wide participation,
So offer all that skill has crowned
To this tax-burdened nation.
The shares portend
A dividend
Of cent per cent. Below is found
Certified information.

" The Chairman, Lord Macheath, C.B.,
A proverb on the Clyde is ;
His ten directors guarantee
The strictest bonâ fides.
Our Auditors,
Solicitors,
And other bores in scores agree
That nothing magnified is.

" The Persian Government has framed
Concessions to Great Britain.
All contracts since the Flood are named.
No shares are underwritten.
The Brokers get
But three pence net—
' Goodwill,' a million (*under*claimed) :
Head office at Thames Ditton."

(2) The New Money-Article

How human ring the epithets
Employed by Stock Exchange gazettes
To animate its fickle pets
With poignancy *sans* bridle.
" Dull," " buoyant," " flat," " to soar inclined "
Or " stagnant," " sag." Some out of mind
Lie " drooping." Some, alas, we find
" Irregularly idle."

When they tell us things are " easing,"
Prima facie 'tis pleasing,
But on second thoughts is teazing,
For it indicates a loss of L.S.D.
The report " Conditions quiet "
Strikes me just as if the diet
Of St. John the Baptist *I* ate,
And discovered that it disagreed with me.

But the person of this City
Money Article I pity
More than any in my ditty
Is " Rails Featureless." It rends the heart in twain
To imagine a poor creature
Dispossessed of every feature !
Merely pulp ! I do entreat your
Contribution to enfeature him again.

Next, all point to point exceeded,
" Jumps " of sixty points unheeded,
As dear Watney Combe and Reid did,
Is undoubtedly a lesson for us all.
Then the " breaks " (which break the thrifty)—
In an hour some thirteen-fifty !—
Oh, there must be something shifty
In the table, cue, or ball.

Stocks " shed " or " mark," " the turn " or so,
In " slackness " merrily they go.
Their game is Blind Man's Buff, we know—
Some " steady," some " unsteady,"
They " boom " or " slump," " react " or rise.
" In great demand " or " short supplies."
Mines, Oils and Bonds and Companies
To romp are always ready.

O shame to stay sweet children's play !
Yet " Settlements," the First of May,
Some grievous Jewish holiday,
Or Bank rate, drop their sport on,
In vain. Sweet Childhood soon reclaims
The laughter of its guileless games,
And calls policemen nasty names
Around the Street Throgmorton.

Of those who teach us to invest
Is one who tempers zest with jest,
And talks jocosely, to attest
Sweet children's festive frolic,
In flippant *jeux-de-mots* he deals,
Under gay nicknames he conceals
Grave complications and reveals
That nought is melancholic.

The " tips " he gives you, gone astray,
Await their resurrection-day.
Their death was just a funny way
Innate in mortal chances.
He jingles with his cap and bells,
Some *risqué* story smartly tells,
And then away he dances.

While strangers from the far outside
Assume " Sir Oracle " applied
To bubbles, offer " margins " wide
And Eldorados endless.
" A Righteous Man," the Scripture said
Was never seen " to beg his bread,"
And these, I notice, seem well-fed !
And certainly not friendless.

Their circulars career like mad,
And now that times are passing bad,
Starved country clergymen are glad
With such to rub their noses,
So, simple children, gather we
Our Nuts and May around your tree,
And join your Maypole revelry,
And sing A Ring of Roses.

XIX.—THE NEW M.P.

Let me at once own that on the whole the new, and especially the younger, members of Parliament are a great improvement on their predecessors for many a generation. They are more earnest, better educated, less prejudiced, more graduates of life's university. I am not sure, however, whether they are more representative (in the face of press-manipulated-and-monopolized opinion), and I am sure that they are not so independent as they were in older times when no other taskmaster than organized opinion piped the tune. There is, too, that despicable four hundred a year which has turned a trust into a trade; there is that modern cannonade of questions which provoke discussion without affording it; and there is a general decay of humour and too often of dignity—apart from immemorial forms—unredeemed by the kind of impudence that is amusing. Further, there is the depressing habit of reading speeches from typescript which glues both eyes and mouth to the paper.

All these fallings-off are to be deplored and belong not only to the mechanical influences of the age, but to the levelling Jacobinism of the French Revolution. Yet in the main, I repeat, the average member of Parliament displays a distinct advance. I do not here include most of the "Labour" Party members, not because the best of them are exceptions to the general progress—far from it. But because they are not in most instances so much the members for constituencies as they are the members for the Trade Unions—for a State within the State. They are abstract rather than concrete members of Parliament. Perhaps in the very progress there lurks a danger inseparable from an average enlightenment—the danger of less leadership, less foresight, and a certain sort of serious yet eclectic indifference, a bias towards "gestures," and a shrinking from rough or decisive action.

Most of the virtues have their vices, and vice versa, but as a whole and in the main, the House of Commons has never been less of a show or a rehearsal. It draws nearer to Burke's "grand inquest of the nation" than it was in the throes of the Reform Bill. Save in foreign affairs, of which it is, and always was, profoundly ignorant, it is much closer to realities, or, at any rate, to the rind of realities, than of yore. To these generalisations it may be added that the newest element in the House of Commons—save the feminine—is the journalistic, whether indirectly or directly—a sign perhaps of omnipotent omniscience. The predominance of lawyers is no novelty, though never was the Bar more prominent or more disposed to make a case out of a cause. And even if the prizes do not always tumble on its lap, it may afterwards be rewarded by directorships of fat companies.

And there is yet another new feature. Before the War, you more or less knew what a Conservative or Liberal or a Radical meant. Since the advent of the Socialist (cleverly named Labour) Party you don't know where you are. Semi-Communists masque as Liberals, Socialists, or Conservatives. Radicals are at a discount, and as for a united Liberal Party, it does not seem to exist.

One thing, however, about its late dissected and now galvanized corpse is curiously evident. The coroner sits on it repeatedly and pronounces various verdicts: now it is "Suicide while of unsound mind," and now that it is not dead but sleeping. The doctors are called in, as well as the Royal Humane Society. They pronounce that its circulation can be restored by one nostrum or another. And the nostrums thus hazardously proposed are never considered with respect to the health of the living body politic, but from the mere standpoint of stimulating the corpse. The last reviver, I believe, is to be Local Option. Meanwhile the coffin of the once Liberal Party hangs, like Mahomet's, midway between earth and heaven.

It is clear that the modern M.P. acts many parts on his old-new stage. Only a few specimens can be here attempted. There is the professional question-monger; there is the new type of business-man who, with all his "push and go," is seldom much heard of within the sound of Bow Bells. And there is the man who atones for insignificance by proclaiming himself the "friend" of eminence—"my right honourable, or honourable friend Such-and-Such"—many of these gentlemen being

either hostile or barely known to him. That Disraeli would never allow. He deemed it not only false but undignified. This growing habit is just as if two public schoolboys in different houses, united only by antipathies and acquainted merely by sight, were to be always vapouring about affectionate intimacy. Such affectations do not happen to boys, yet, though the House of Commons has long ceased to be "the best club in London," it grows more and more the greatest of our public schools. Its atmosphere is public spirited and communicates itself—often as an education—to all who breathe it. This it is which has saved the nation from that kind of Cadocracy which, not many years ago, almost impended.

May I be forgiven if in sketching the first of our newest parliamentary types—that of the question-monger—I resort once more to metre in the delineation of two varieties? I will begin with Mr. Bluck Kenwig, who asks more questions than there are days in the year, and each apparently with some covert or oblique insinuation. Like Pilate, he stays not for an answer: as thus—

"Mr. Home Secret'ry,
Now that things get awry,
Kindly inform me forsooth
Why you send daily hence
Innocent aliens
Simply for speaking the truth?

"Mr. War-Minister,
Oh, such a sinister
Rumour distresses our isle.
Are British Edomites
Menacing Freedomites
Waving red flags on the Nile?

"Say, Mr. Chancellor,
Will you soon cancel, or
Substitute, something for the
Selfish, iniquitous
Crushing, ubiquitous,
Blasphemous duty on tea?

" Now, Mr. Colonies,
How if the Polynese
Full independence demands ?
Here is my evidence—
Proofs, the most heavy, dense,
Empire-fed fool understands.

" Hi, Foreign Minister,
Did Hugo Stinnes stir
Capitalistic behest
In a downed Germany ?—
Did we prefer any
Protests ? If not, *I* protest.

" Mr. Health-Minister,
Mothers un-Guinnessed err—
Children are branded with shame.
Keenly my pity mates
With illegitimates,
Lists of statistics I claim.

" Tell me if true it is
That their annuities
Soon will be Statute by right ?
What ! Out of order I'm !
Or on the border ! ! !—I'm
Moving adjournment to-night ! "

But the way of Sir John Bullton's questioning forms a complete contrast. To each Minister he addresses interrogations of a suggestive and constructive order, though more pungently expressed than I can hope to mimic in my dull reveries. He is less pained than astonished, though he may sometimes vociferate his disappointments. I would rather picture him as the gentle shepherd, and in rhymes wise and otherwise :

" I wonder why poor farmers wail
That all their toil is doomed to fail
Because no premier yet insists
On choosing agriculturalists
To manage that great Ministry.—
I wonder why ?

" I wonder why we never frame
A foreign policy the same
For more than half a year, and choose
Perpetual exchange of views
And " formulas " which facts deny.—
I wonder why ?

" I wonder why we lack the sense
In view of some new Conference
At Washington or like conclaves,
To see Britannia rule the waves,
Not idly fool them—really I
Must wonder why ?

" I wonder why Lord Balfour's tour
In Palestine seems folly pure,
And only fans the fury fell
Of Ishmael and Israel ;
Especially the Russian fry.—
I wonder why ?

" I wonder why at home we brawl
O'er nought particular at all,
Yet, like Jack Horner, sit and cry
' O what a virtuous boy am I.'
What, no reply from Industry ?—
I wonder why ?

" I wonder why, if Parliament,
Left ill alone and went content
That King and Privy Council and,
Say, Harrods' Stores should take command,
We might not such a venture try—
I wonder why ? "

So far the greatest novelty of all has been left untouched, the few feminine M.P.s—Aristophanes' Ecclesiazusæ—who now grace that assembly. The Labour Party lady, Miss Wilkinson, whose æsthetic costumes are so faithfully chronicled by the Press, is, I think, a real accession, for she told the male majority that they need not worry about any extension of the franchise on the grounds of its leading to a vote for the best-

looking man. There she showed a sense of humour which in time should bring her some sense of proportion in graver issues.

Another lady is a true Conservative of the most virile type, and she cannot be reproached with ever having idled, for from childhood she worked hard for her living and is in contact with realities. Another is a practical philanthropist who knows what she is doing and saying. It is Lady Astor, however —our Aunt Sam—who puzzles me. She is a Conservative, but for the life of me I cannot discover what she wishes to conserve, except the portrait which at length she has so gracefully withdrawn from the corridors of the House. She advocates some sort of Prohibition which she will never carry in the face of the beer-loving Briton. In many of her utterances she seems vaguely socialistic, though a misty Socialism is opposed to the tenets of freedom combined with order.

She is femininist to the knees in days when perhaps there are too many femininists in trousers. She does not inherit the aboriginal traditions of England. But she is sentimental to a fault—she belongs to the Sentimental Party—generous, wealthy, ebullient ; she is a millionaire-democrat with the propensities which mark the specialities of the two species on either side of the hyphen. She is an omnivorous hostess, good-natured, publicity-loving, all-embracing. But a Conservative no, though I doubt not that she so believes, and that the Conservatives much welcome her. She and Miss Wilkinson between them set the two extremes of fashion in the House, and *les extrémes se touchent.*

Her irrepressibility is charming. There is no stopping her. Whatever the formal traffic may be in Parliament Street, she darts in and out of it, like a motor, which indeed in many ways she resembles. She fascinates me, and I would not miss her exuberant interruptions for worlds. Luckily the genius of this country is opposed to revolutions, but should there ever be one here, I tremble to think of the carmagnole, as, exquisitely garbed, she led the pythonesses of Plymouth, like a whirlwind, to the tune of some new Marseillaise. I can only quote Shelley on Freedom :

> " Thou art not, as impostors say,
> A Shadow soon to pass away,
> A Superstition and a name,
> Echoing from the cave of Fame.
> For the Labourer thou art bread
> And a comely table spread."

M

And, speaking of Shelley, may I quote myself ?

Lady Astor, Lady Astor,
Do take Shelley for thy pastor.
Hast thou ever read Alastor,
With its monodies on Silence and the Wild—
Heavenly Twins like Pollux-Castor ?
Lady Astor, Lady Astor,
Wouldst thou like it ? I'm uncertain,
So had better drop the curtain.—
Thou art such a very, very modern child.

She is by no means the sole Member for Sentimentality and it distresses me to notice the repugnance to her shown by many of the Labour-party Socialists who are the prime advocates of sentiment as opposed to sense. One of these *larmoyants* even went so far the other day as bitterly to bewail that the silk-tax was depriving the loveliest working girls of the only bright spot in their lives—their artificial silk stockings ! We change indeed.

But one institution still abides unchangeable—the Parliamentary Tipstaff. He is a splendid old Guardsman who has been heard to regret that modern squeamishness too often baulks him of his legitimate prey. The habitual offender has reason to be thankful that he is not often treated as this avenging angel would like to treat him. He has seen men come and go, and things come and go, for ages. But he goes on for ever. I, on the other hand, must not copy his stalwart example. My pen is wearing out, like your patience, so I will stop.

XX.—THE NEW P.M.

Our great Prime Ministers used to be men who led—Chatham, Pitt, Canning, Disraeli. Our new Prime Ministers are captains who are led, save in party management. Rarely does a modern Premier initiate anything of his own accord. Too often he sheds or shirks responsibility and takes shelter under Committees of Inquiry. No longer does he say "to this man 'Come' and he cometh," or "to that man go and he goeth." He lets "I dare not wait upon I would." He consults every and anyone's opinion, convenes countless meetings, ferrets out miscellaneous counsel, takes the colour of his ideas like a chameleon from his surroundings, is a collectivist who—*mashallah!*—even writes for the newspapers. What used to be the exception is now the rule. There are actually Cabinet Committees, bodies perilously like the Carolean Cabal. The new Prime Minister is too much at the universal beck and call—he is the hall-porter. Moreover, he must have some visible badge for the public gaze. Now it is flowing locks, now a "wizard's" wand, now a homely pipe, now a halo of moral "gesture." We have passed the day when familiarity breeds contempt. What would the giants have said, had their official abode been bandied from mouth to mouth by intruder on intruder as "number ten"? And we know what Dr. Johnson would have exclaimed—"Sir, his insolence is only equalled by his ignorance." But we live and learn.

What is the lesson? We must live and let live. It is no use asking too many questions. Do you remember that old story of the crowded election in the early seventies where the auditors of the great man were packed together as closely as sardines in their tin? The atmosphere was insufferable. A rough customer who had barely contrived to get in kept on shouting a single question—"What did Mr. Gladstone say in 1867?"

These interruptions soon became as unbearable as the atmosphere. The police were called in, and with much difficulty they forced a way out and ejected him. "My Gawd!" he exclaimed, as he drew his first breath of fresh air. "Why," asked the constable, "why the devil did you go on bawling that question of yours? What the deuce *did* old Gladstone say in sixty-sevin, eh?" "Ask me another," was the reply. "I dunno—I only warnted to get out of that damned stewing-pan."

So perhaps we may be excused for asking a few questions on the same pretext. We want—overmuch may be—to get out of several damned stewing-pans. Why is the new Prime Minister so seldom his own master, so rarely "the captain" of his "soul"? The answer is twofold. He apparently cannot help being the serf of the Press, and his party is now almost always divided, as it never should be in strong hands.

Years ago I ventured to prophesy just after the Armistice that a Coalition Government meant government by the Press. Coalition divides the mind and weakens the will. Its double conscience makes Gallios of us all. And now we are suffering from the experiment. In every direction we are suffering from experiments. Shallow experiment is so easy, and often, in an old country like ours, so fatal. No modern alchemist can turn stones into gold, but they can turn gold into stones. Poor Mr. Modern Prime Minister! You sit on the seats of the mighty. You aspire to benefit the whole nation. In comes this runner or that, breathless with importunity. It can't be done, it shan't be done, though if it were done—and that quickly—the main body of public opinion would cheer you. The nation is inarticulate; it is waiting for a leader neither starched nor mealy-mouthed. Speak up, sir, speak up.

One more consideration which typifies much beyond it. The Government of this country, even its policy, is now largely carried on by the heads of the Civil Service, by what is vulgarly called the Bureaucracy. As a rule, it is very ably thus carried on, though perhaps the Foreign Office and the Treasury are not always experts. If any Prime Minister wants to violate the long traditions of these departments, he is soon told that it cannot be done: they are his schoolmasters. This has proved an effective check on wild, unskilled adventures, since these departments represent and regulate both experience and deportment. And we may note in passing, that this brake, so to speak, on the governmental wheel is one of which

the head Civil Servants are proud: it gives them hidden control and increases their sense of responsibility; they are oligarchs. No other country possesses a Civil Service with governmental powers outside their administrative faculties, least of all France, whose weakness resides in the poorer quality of her Civil Service. But gradually, owing perhaps to the comparative degeneration of Premiers, they are becoming masters instead of splendid and tried subordinates. The eighteenth-century Whig oligarchs were their own and most effective Bureaucracy. Do you suppose that Sir Robert Walpole would ever have taken his orders from any head of any department, or Chatham and his son (who really heralded the new Tories) from underlings or overlings however distinguished? These called the tune, whereas our latter-day Prime Ministers mainly dance to the tune of others.

I thoroughly believe that the types in history repeat themselves, and so imperfectly (for parallels are hard), I shall try to sketch four new Prime Ministers under classical labels. This method, in the quaint wording of the preface of the English-as-it-is-spoke Portuguese Handbook, may be "acceptable to the youth of this country and without, at which I dedicate him particularly." Fancy, four Prime Ministers well within ten years! Did England ever know the like? And so, as questionaires, we return to "What did Mr. Gladstone say in sixty-sevin?"

(1) Demosthenes

Demosthenes, as we all know, sprang from a small trading family. What is not generally known is that he attended the Athenian Academy, where he won a scholarship and attained marked eminence. A successor to Socrates presided whose bias, like his prototype's, inclined rather to the aristocratic than to the democratic party and was rarely dogmatical. Here his pet pupil differed from him, being from his cradle a didactic democrat, though never a demagogue, and laying down the law academically on every occasion. His university gave him his first start in life, though his biographers, unaware of this, feign that he practised oratory at the seaside with a pebble in his mouth. His eloquence was of the first rank, terse, elegant, incisive, capable of dignifying even the trivial or the devious. Cold it may have been, like himself, but in its prime it was never sesquipedalian, nor did it then lend itself to the taunt of

Demosthenes' later critics that it had become at once fixed and florid—a sort of cast-iron Corinthianism.

After many vicissitudes, during which he rose to high offices and to many occasions, he succeeded a "Don't care Hippocleides" as Athenian Prime Minister. His polished idealism found great scope in vindicating the claims of every Greek State to complete independence and in vaunting the Panhellenic theory with sonorous certainty. But despite the efforts of historians to prove that he was a man of action, a man of action Demosthenes never was. Everyone had long foreseen that King Philip of Macedon was bent on overthrowing Athens, just as, earlier, the Persian despot, who found Themistocles so useful, had designed to do.

Demosthenes made a number of fine speeches, but did nothing in particular till the thunderbolt fell, for he knew too well that the Athenian forces, which had been reduced as a safeguard for universal peace, were inadequate. He loitered through crisis to catastrophe. Besides, he was bent on so many domestic reforms that he had no time for much else. Even in these he was a great procrastinator and was nicknamed by the rabble, "Something, Old Wait-and-see."

As early as 346 B.C., when he had just delivered his Olynthiacs, it is recorded that he, with Philocrates, a pro-Philippian, was in full favour of no hostilities, and somehow believed that Philip would reduce his armaments. There was a later period also—one during the War—when the malice of his foes whispered that Philocrates and he were at it again.

But events marched, and so did Philip. At length something had to be done when the King was eventually within an ace of invasion. In the end, though pressure was still needed to bring him to an issue, he made the most magnificent speeches. Athens should never sheathe the sword till all her enemies rolled in the dust. She was the divine champion of the Panhellenic cause, and every Greek State would rally round her standard to defeat the barbarians. He did not then imagine—nor was imagination his forte—that it would take long to subjugate Philip. He was mistaken. Our deathless heroes agonized and bled in hundreds of thousands for their dear country but not for the Panhellenic cause, and the great orator still went on waiting and not foreseeing. He paid small heed to the admirals and generals who warned him that, without prompt equipment for the vast forces daily more requisite, the War might be

infinitely prolonged, though to the last drop of their unconquerable blood the Athenians would fight on till victory was assured.

Demosthenes was beginning to think that there might be something in these urgencies, though at first he wished to bribe the workers at home into service by huge wages, when, like a bombshell, came that unfortunate Battle of Chæronea. Demosthenes immediately ordered an official version of this victory to be printed, but not very long afterwards, his rival found the means to oust him from office, by embracing him in the morning and telephoning to the Editor of the *Athenian Gazette* in the afternoon. It must be owned that Demosthenes behaved with magnanimous dignity, and he has since been rewarded by the tribute of a golden coronet.

Everyone remembers his admirable speech "Concerning the Crown." The biographers of Demosthenes aver that he committed suicide through a poisoned potion, and left one hundred and twenty manuscripts behind him. But this, of course, is but a political allegory. The golden crown-wearer is, I rejoice to say (for no one can help liking his convivial presence and genial bearing), still among us "to warn, to counsel, and command." By some further error the muddled chroniclers have mistaken the authorship of the above-named manuscripts. They must be the handiwork of his wife, the shy autobiographer, and fabulous conversationalist, who, it is said, insisted that the golden crown should be an improved replica of the original one worn by the ancestral Kleisthenes generations earlier.

Some silly people objected on the ground that it was as copyright as the books which she has published in crown octavo, but Athenian commonsense made short work of this quibble. The Heralds College, however, did stipulate that the inscription round it should read as "The Coronet of Kleisthenes and Demosth," which has been duly accomplished. It was Homer, was it not, who sang "Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown"? Let me assure him that textually this is inaccurate. Demosthenes is the most truthful of great men. His head, which is a very full one, is the reverse of uneasy. He does *not* wear his crown, save as an occasional emblem of the stakes when he is playing bridge. In conclusion, may I express a sincere hope that Demosthenes will continue his beautiful speeches in our own language; the Greek orations are so hard

to decipher that they discourage classical learning. Demosthenes' crystal eloquence must never be set as a theme to be re-translated into the Athenian tongue. His classical scholarship, however, was so renowned that a contemporary Syrian alluded to it in the versicle of "The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib."

This feeble summary is the true history of Demosthenes, now Thane of Kleisthenes and Demosth. I forego the temptation of abridging his brilliant wife's record, because I notice that no ancient historian ever includes the life-story of illustrious helpmeets save by some bare allusion—as in the case of Xantippe. Only the poets enlarge on their heroines—as witness Helen of Troy and Lola Montes. There is another reason also for an omission which derogates from the permanent value of my random volume. There is much in store. The Thane's wife's autobiographical genius will, let us hope, receive no check from the joint pressure of the Golden Crown. May we look forward to some "Paradise Regained"?—if possible in Miltonic verse, for the theme requires nothing less than an epic.

(2) Cleon

It has been said in a Life of Cleon the demagogue-agitator of Athens during the Peloponnesian War, "At first he seems to have formed one of the large party who protested against the policy of the War, and on that ground became a bitter opponent of Pericles." But his views must have afterwards changed, since we find him repeatedly urging active warlike measures in opposition to the peace party of Nicias. That is very true. Cleon, the pacifist of pacifists, did much, as the Great War proceeded, to help and hearten us, though his ignorances and confusions also made for the War's protraction. But when the War ended, he destroyed the peace. He was clever enough to insinuate not only that the War was the Armageddon to end all wars, but that it was a war for "Democracy," whatever that means outside the annexation of private property.

Of course, it was nothing of the sort, but a war of self-defence. Still, it was adroit of Cleon thus to twist things and a prime example of the spell that he exercised. For he thrives on the general oblivion of events. He knows that the New Mob forgets on Tuesday what happened on Monday, and he has

wielded this amulet to such an excess that it has practically undone him. There was another spell which this "son-of-the-people-by-the-people-for-the-people" exercised over the people. He persuaded them that he was a great military strategist. Once he was successful through the aid of a first-class general, but the Thracian Expedition which he led proved a first-class failure. His immense vitality, market-place energy, and alternating currents of sentimentalism maintained him as an electric power-station for a time. But he owned neither judgment nor discretion; he indulged in flea-skips of bouncing policy, and was the acrobat as hero.

An unfounded over-self-confidence is no passport to national trust, nor does any Mr. Pliant-Plausible inspire respect. Only inward strength clothed in diffidence can kindle faith and rivet allegiance. It seems clear, however, that he was unduly decried. If he was loud in his promises, violent in his diatribes and a tub-thumper on the platform where he always invested solemn frivolities with a religious air, if he was oblique in his manœuvres and reckless both in forecast and invective, he must also have been the most cheery, persuasive and winsome commercial traveller for the firm of Cheapjack Brothers that ever cracked a jest, a bottle, or his own glassware. Alas! he cracked them so fatally that their fragments surround him as they once did Alnaschar in the Arabian tale. Even now his inviting smile—that perhaps of a salesman rather than of a statesman, diffuses amiability as he receives the freedom of city on city within the Athenian League.

There must, I repeat, be something more in this universal provider than mere sharp-wittedness. The secret is, I think, that he deluded himself into belief. He believed in every successive remedy that he advertised, poor crestfallen Cleon, unjustly belaboured by Aristophanes who should have satirized not the puppet, but the multitude who pulled the strings. It was the mob, his own Absolom, who made him—the mob to whom he bowed a supple knee. And the mob it was who dethroned him when they discovered that violent promises made in spring produced tame disappointments in autumn. The mob was his spoiled child, petted and pampered when everyone else was in dire distress. But spoiled children are proverbially ungrateful, and their forgetfulness of facts ended in their forgetfulness of fictions—including the fiction of Cleon himself. It was the popular breeze that blew the elusive "old man of the

sea" into it, and he was drowned by his own offspring who had ungratefully satirized him as "Bubble and Squeak."

All the same, he founded a fund for scientific research for which all Athenians should thank him.

(3) Aristides

I have just been meeting Diogenes with his lantern, in quest of an honest man. That pioneer of the Cynic philosophers, it will be remembered, used to harden himself by rolling in hot sand during the summer and embracing the chilliest masterpieces of Athenian sculpture in winter. It was then that Diogenes ought to have lit on Aristides, though chronology forbids such an encounter. But I like to discard time in my quest after the essences of things. Aristides the Just, so just as to have become proverbial, was fond of a sandy soil, and devoted to the arts: indeed, he often carried a dictionary of classical quotations in his pocket. So Diogenes the self-sufficing and Aristides the self-restraining should certainly have forgathered.

Aristides, it will be recalled, shone at the Battle of Marathon, where he was so scrupulously honest in dividing the spoil that Themistocles the Unjust was irritated. The Athenian Democracy, too, was incensed to feel that he was especially distinguished for any sort of virtue whatever. Had he "pinched" an appreciable share of the spoil, they would probably have applauded him as an honest wage-earner, for to work without disproportionate reward appeared to them contemptible. The fact that Aristides had anonymously and munificently presented large sums for the equipment of triremes during the War aggravated the petty meanness of Themistocles and his adherents.

After this, very little about Aristides is recorded. We gather that he was a stainless man of business, conversant with affairs and yet instinct with the patriotic sentiments so rightly dear to the Athenian heart. Of course, Themistocles, who was a man of intrigue, managed to get him ostracized—a curious process which required your autograph on a tile. Aristides signed without a murmur, but only the collectors of the autographs of Just Men were benefited. Time, who avenges all things, soon brought about redress. After a spotless accommodation with the rancorous Themistocles at the

opening of the Persian War, the double-faced rival behaved so shockingly that Aristides, however reluctant, felt that conscience demanded his exile. So he convened an assembly at the Kleisthenian Club and exposed the machinations of his enemy. The result was that, without a dissentient voice, Aristides was chosen as chieftain, while the would-be supplanter with all his cleverness was turned out. Aristides came in with a bumper majority merely and justly because he was the justest man of the time. As Bellochios, a contemporary poet, beautifully expressed it :

> " . . . To show what might
> Be done by simply doing right."

At this moment the Athenian finances were in an awkward fix. Athens lived—in a smaller way no doubt even than our own Oxford—by her exports. In return for statues, tunny fish, dried figs, second-hand speeches, fifth-rate generals, and the like necessaries of life, she received the superfluities of corn, ivory, papyrus leaves and foreign philosophers which her population coveted. The slaves, however, who were the artificers of her exports, were persuaded by the wicked to " strike," and these interludes of industry were attended by demands as to hours and wages that precluded Athens from competing with Asiatic trade. It occurred to Aristides that it would be a just thing—or just the thing—to impose a trifling duty on certain imports. His soul ached for the enforced unemployment both of free men and slaves. So he properly set up a committee to report on the difference in prices that such a reform might possibly entail. To commit everything to committees was a weakness of the age, and no one could complain. But Themistocles was not to be baffled. He prayed to Mercury, the god of Cunning, imploring him to thwart this policy by inducing the simple Aristides to blurt out the whole plan without any details before his committee could report.

Themistocles kept his own poet on the premises, who confounded Bellochios by unworthily observing,

> " . . . Thus doth Fate
> Defeat intelligence eighth-rate,"

followed by a panegyric on his caballing patron. All this was most undeservedly disconcerting. The Athenian people

and Justice had alike decreed that Aristides, whose idealisms were first-rate and whose intelligence pleased them, should poll three-quarters of the Athenian franchise. Themistocles, however, was the very devil. Without the slightest warrant (for his faction was at the bottom of the poll) he next declared that by the Athenian Constitution Euthydemus the Sophist, who had somehow secured the second place, was entitled to be installed in office. Aristides, the soul of honour, allowed this disaster to happen, thinking nothing worse than any scene with Themistocles and his henchmen: "Pity, he so heavily upright," was the disgusting comment of a Japanese admirer.

So Euthydemus succeeded, and for months was backed by Themistocles. He hated Aristides even more than he hated Euthydemus, was furious at having been forced on the previous occasion to be frozen by canvassing a northern constituency, and counted on being certain to ensure the first place whenever Euthydemus' conduct of affairs became insufferable. It must certainly be chronicled that under these most unrighteous and provoking circumstances the single-minded Aristides behaved like the angel Abdiel, caring, as he always did, entirely for his country (as he featured it) without the slightest thought for himself or his party. Within a year his unselfishness was rewarded and the downfall of the Sophist, who had disgusted the Athenians, took place.

Still another election followed. And then, to the surprise of Themistocles, whom Nemesis had overtaken with her lame foot, Aristides triumphed beyond his wildest expectations. What most of all distressed him, however, was the increasing curse of manufactured unemployment, but so just was he that he disdained to stop such manœuvres by any direct action, believing that Faith, Hope, and Charity would effect more than legislative interference. Unfortunately he completely erased from his mind the complots of Euthydemus with the Persian Court, which, let us hope (for we have no attesting chronicle), will eventually be utterly foiled by the sheer influence of good will. Moreover, Aristides bent all his energies to forward a trade understanding with the Athenian Colonies—a consummation devoutly to be wished. But here again artificial obstacles intervened. All this pleased Euthydemus as well as Themistocles, who insinuated that the home rectitude of Aristides was innocence abroad. I myself do not think so. I believe that eventually his transparency will spell wisdom. But, all the same,

most of his admirers do desire that sometimes on ripe occasions he would put down his foot instead of pointing a moral with his forefinger. And especially in the case of the seditious aliens who are swamping Athens and penetrating some of her possessions.

May I here, though it does not synchronize, introduce a passage from Montaigne's essay on " Various Events from the same Counsel " ? " . . . I saw, when I was a boy, a gentleman who was governor of a great city, upon occasion of a popular commotion and fury, not knowing what other course to take, go out of a place of very great strength and security and commit himself to the mercy of the seditious rabble, in hopes by that means to appease the tumult before it grew to a more formidable head ; but it was ill for him that he did so, for he was there miserably slain. But I am not, nevertheless, of opinion that he committed so great an error in going out . . . as he did in choosing a gentle and submissive way for the effecting his purpose, and in endeavouring to quiet this storm, rather by obeying than commanding, and by entreaty rather than by remonstrance, and am inclined to believe that a gracious severity with a soldier-like way of commanding, full of security and confidence suitable to the quality of his person and the dignity of his command, would have succeeded better with him. . . . There is nothing so little to be expected . . . from this many-headed monster, when so incensed, as humanity and good nature ; it is much more capable of reverence and fear. . . . He ought boldly to have stemmed the current and to have borne himself bravely aloft. . . ."

All of this shows how right old Diogenes was to roll in red-hot sand all the summer and embrace the iciest statues all winter. An energy so ascetic was not in vain. Let us devoutly pray that his pupil's passionate indifference alike to simooms and icebergs may not tempt one of his contriving foes on some trivial occasion either to scorch him to cinders or freeze him into a stalactite.

(4) Euthydemus

Euthydemus was a Sophist—that is to say, a twisting teacher of twisted theories. There seem to have been two eccentrics of this name. But the son of Dioles is the more authentic, and it is he who fits the type best, for we know from Xenophon that Socrates rebuked him for thinking that he

knew more than he did. This indeed was the foible of one who may be said to have fancied that if a house was built after some strange fashion—inside out, for example—its regenerated occupier's mind would be certain to correspond. I say "occupier" advisedly, because, despite protests to the contrary, Euthydemus disbelieved in private ownership or commerce and was foolish enough to suppose that the State—by which is meant both the Government and the taxpayers of the day—ought to own everything and indeed everybody. It was a handy doctrine, appealing as it did to greed, fanaticism, and idleness, but it ignored the human instinct which aims at individual direction as the safest means towards initiative, exertion, and thrift; human nature is the everlasting disappointer and counterblaster of theorists.

Euthydemus maintained that by subsidizing extravagant wages out of the public purse the languishing export trade would revive, but Asia thought otherwise and bought commodities far more cheaply elsewhere. Yet our Sophist went on proclaiming the fallacy which those who wanted the money or lacked a mind brought themselves to uphold. Moreover, he maintained that everyone had a right to be paid at a high rate, whether he worked well or not, and that the whole nation (whom he miscalled "the People") was at his back. By the same token it is recorded that when stones were hurled at him in the streets as a demonstration against such pernicious doctrines, "Now," he exclaimed, "it is evident that all are unanimous in my favour."

Another of his pet sophisms was that which blindly confuses money with wealth, for a "State" can surely be none the richer through a transference of coins from individual pockets to a State coffer. If a dozen men in one room emptied their purses and handed the total to one of them, clearly that room would become no richer, though if all worked willingly together and sold their products abroad, *that* would spell wealth. Euthydemus deemed otherwise. He was bent not on production but distribution, on division of property far more than on division of labour. And if anyone objected that, even from this angle of outlook, a perfect Government would be necessary, Euthydemus would retort that a Government by Euthydemuses must be so perfect and indeed infallible that it would not be a Government of so-called individuals at all, but of one Divine Abstract typified for inferior Abstractions as Euthydemus.

He revelled in abstracts of every tinge, and though he lived in a concrete house, would never concede that he did so, but assert that since he was not a body but a super-soul he really lived in the clouds, which was his romantic name for a fog.

Another habit of his which proved very distasteful to the Athenians was that he brushed away all the frontiers of nations. Nations were nothing to Euthydemus, who at one time roamed all over Asia, proclaiming the dogma that patriotism was an outworn myth, that all were citizens of the world, that the wide world itself was a mere speck-citizen of a billion planets, and that these again were only citizens of Space, just as Space itself was only an atom-inhabitant of Infinity, and Infinity of Eternity, and Eternity of Euthydemus. Whence it will be manifest that Euthydemus belonged to the Atomic School of philosophistry and rejoiced in universal wide-mindedness.

It would greatly have wounded both the sensibility and the vanity of Euthydemus to be told that this frame of mind was the worst, because the flimsiest, form of egotism. Yet it was and is now and ever shall be. Euthydemus was quite ready (always provided that no force was used) to burn down his neighbour's supposed house with supposed fire in order to roast his supposed egg. Such was Euthydemus the hypothetical, peripatetic Sophist of Lossimathé. And wherever he went he played the same tune on bagpipes, accordions and penny whistles. All this harmony spread discord.

It would appear that he was a born teacher. After a few years at a very public school, he soon set up a school for himself which he left for the university of politics as befitted his expanding ambitions. He then displayed the airs of a " superior person." It was a grand thing to harangue others on the Extracorporeality of Man. It was also occasionally entertaining, though he was by no means a humourist, and ere many years had passed he contrived to be a member of the Athenian House of Assembly. For some time, however, he languished till he allied himself with a league of Trade-slave-guilds and also with the " Phabiastæ," an association of fantastic malcontents whose demiurge president was an ironical obscurantist, while its secretary was a mute and minute Professor of Uneconomics. This Association proved the real educator of Euthydemus. It inspired him to grow less and less practical under the pretext of being more and more positive. It supplied him with the heaviest artillery of the noble army of the Sophists *à la mode*.

It has already been shown how Euthydemus managed *malgré lui* to become an ephemeral Prime Minister as a stop-gap between the two traditional parties of Athenian history. And this was the more remarkable because only a few years divided his rectorship from a day when one of the Attic Demes had rejected his candidature with contumely.

At first he and his colleagues did not do so badly. The Association had forbidden him all revolutionary "alarums and excursions," and had advised him to make for "inevitable graduality," as their secretary expressed it when for once he had condescended to open his lips. The Athenians were surprised at this moderation and at first fancied that, at the worst, he was only a sheep in wolf's clothing. The extremists of the Trade-slave-guilds, however, were terribly disappointed and vowed vengeance. They well knew that *their* tail could wag *his* head. Meanwhile, Euthydemus kept attending conferences and councils to his heart's content, especially loving to hear himself lecture the Macedonians who for some time past had been compassing the destruction of Athens. He had resolved to combine the premiership with the supervision of foreign affairs so that all the world might admire his ensample of godly statesmanship.

Nothing, however, could save Euthydemus from himself. He became more and more self-intoxicated with water (for he never would touch wine), and also more and more secretively bemuddled. His anxious colleagues consulted the physicians, who averred that he was suffering from a disease common among Sophists the name of which—"Oedikephalitis"—may be rendered as "swollen-head," but Euthydemus laughed them to scorn, demonstrating that as he was incorporeal he could have no head, and if he had no head, how could it be swollen? This was unanswerable.

It is only fair to add, however, that once in office, he performed some of its duties very well, though the revolutionaries were incensed and the moderates disappointed by his efforts to please both of them at once. Unfortunately, it was these extremists who counted. Furthermore, being a handsome man, he was adored by many an idealist lady who would not hear a word against him when he was weak enough to excuse the gift of a chariot and a good round sum of preference shares to endow it—as if it were a hospital-cot—from an old and fervent manufacturer-friend. What earthly harm was there

in receiving such a present, even though the friend had almost simultaneously been appointed an Athenian Ephor? But there was great harm in apologizing for his acceptance and deprecating the show of proprietorship which that acceptance might wrongly be taken to imply. The whole affair was "a trust," he urged, not a gift, and he afterwards restored the chariot.

A lady idealist, righteously wrathful over all the dirt stirred up by his enemies over this accident, stood outside the Prytaneum, we are told, and openly upbraided a cynic for daring to slander so holy a man. She said very truly that he was a biblical saint. "Ah yes," frivolously scoffed the spiteful worldling, "and his pockets are lined with preference *Scripture*!" No doubt Euthydemus was traduced, but no doubt he caused the trouble by sophistical explanations. In the political arena none was petty enough to reproach him.

His predecessors had failed in establishing a friendly understanding with the Eubœans, one most requisite, it was thought, for Athens. It so happened that they had just appointed Heriotes, a fellow-Sophist, to preside over them, and the two birds of the same feather chirped cheerfully together till at length a bolt from the blue ended everything. Euthydemus, heading the Trade-and-slave-guilds, had negotiated a pact with the elated Macedonians who tottered on the brink of bankruptcy through despotism. This, the indignant Assembly vetoed. But suddenly it was discovered by the *Athenian Gazette* that a material document had been concealed or withheld. Doubtless this was the result of Euthydemus' mysterious illness, but it was hard to explain it away as a forgery, even though he was personally acquitted. The leaders of the two other parties magnanimously combined. An election was held. The Athenians were tired of instabilities and the "secret diplomacy" which Euthydemus himself was always denouncing. Moreover, they feared extortion and even rapine.

Euthydemus fell before he had even eaten the apple in his Garden-city of Eden. How different, this, from the primeval paradise. There the serpent was the arch-sophist who misrepresented God as the arch-monopolist—"Hath God said?' Euthydemus only asked, "Hath Athens said?" and referred it to Delphi. The Oracle answered as follows: "Athens will prosper when the busybodies mind their own business, and the wrong-headed go to the right-about." The last part of this decree was perforce obeyed by Euthydemus, the first is still in suspense.

XXI.—THE TELEPHONESIAN WAR

In the preceding parodies of premiers I have cursorily mentioned the Peloponnesian War. I have now to adumbrate the Telephonesian War. It is a strenuous modern conflict which engages the mere male against Amazons. The Amazons are not chiefly at fault. What errs is that beastly convenience the instrument itself, and the disgraceful deformation of it through its futile nationalization in London. It is of no avail to pretend by euphemistic subterfuges that the Telephonesian War is only a means to end war. It is a supreme war that propagates fresh combats. It is the Society for the Propagation of Ruptions in Domestic Parts. Say what you will, there is no minimizing the feud. Each of us wages a duel with the much-vexed telephoness.

I am rung up. "The wrong number? Sorry yew have been troubled."—"So am I." I am rung up again. Again the wrong number, again the same exasperating regret. Fatally reattracted towards the machine, I resolve to ring up "Royal, a million double three." The telephoness, Censor by appointment to the Majestic State, gently yet firmly corrects me, "Royal, a million *double* three." I assent, because, in any case, she would have changed the accent. "Number ingaged, shall I call *yew*?" is the response. I am very busy. "Certainly, by all means call me, please," is my amiable reply. I wait for a quarter of an hour without response. Then with un-Job-like impatience I ring again. "What number, please?" I explain that I have given it more than once. No answer. I ring and ring again. "What number, please?" Again I expound. Then at last I learn that the number has been changed. It is now "Imperial, a billion, treble six." I wait again. The line, this time, is out of order. So am I. Gadfly-maddened, after a half an hour of systematic postponement, again I ring.

This time, even that number is "ingaged," after fresh aggravations of redemanding it over and over again. Three-quarters of an hour have elapsed between the long acts of this tragedy. Once more I ring maniacally. And then the pranks of these humourists give me the wrong number once more. Again I ring the merry chimes. I state the number with the utmost self-composure possible. "What number are you calling?" coos the telephoness after an indecent interval. This is the limit. She then brutally refers me to the providential supervisor.

A hyper-refined lady with the voice of a Sibyl responds. I try to explain to her *my* tragedy of *their* errors. She gives me to understand that all will be well that ends well. But the play never ends. Once more I wait. And then I receive the wrong number again. I look out Colney Hatch in the Telephone Directory. Over an hour has gone by since first I embarked on this superficially simple affair. It is a bad job: I am a bad Job, and vent my wrath on the receiver.

Eventually I take the omnibus, which is much quicker than the telephone. Then, during transit, I reflect that I never addressed the telephoness as "Miss," a ceremony that I have noticed all clerks in places where they ring punctiliously observe. Clearly a Miss is better than a mile, or rather a mile —which I walk—is better than a miss.

Now all these infuriating pin-pricks are but links in the endless chain of the Telephonesian War. I recognize that unwarrantably the Amazons have won. I sit down and write to the Controller. The Controller will yield me treaty-rights. Surely he is my natural ally, the defender and protector of the faith ineradicable in the State Telephone. Apparently he must or ought to be the supervisor's husband. Soothingly, like his presumed wife, he assures me that every inquiry will be made into these deplorable circumstances, and that redress will attend my reasonable remonstrance. But redress never comes. Replying to mine of the thirty-first ultimo he begs to inform me that research establishes that on that particular morning I gave—most excusably—the wrong number. Most evidently he *is* the supervisor's husband, and I am left to long for their divorce "nisi" (or nasty) with costs.

To crown all, a fresh insult maddens me. It has just been frigidly announced that from the end of the month my own number will be changed from "Kensington, a thousand

quintuple five," to "Sloane Street, ten thousand, octuple eight." Fresh vistas of explained confusions and confused explanations arise, of harmless necessary omnibuses and exhilarating exercise to follow. Besides, I am to be deprived of being so constantly rung up as the Kensington Town Hall. I am to be robbed of a privilege that is almost a prerogative.

All this I contrast with the old days when the Telephone "Service" was admirably and economically managed by a limited Company instead of by a Chaos unlimited. Further, I recall the War-days when the telephonesses played at a slang-archness instead of at strife, when one of them who answered my club-call concluded by saying, "Ta-ta, well toddle home, old bean." What a contrast with the present costly and excoriating hostilities. This seems to be a period when each class is at daggers drawn with the other simply for the fun of it. Heaven knows that I am not haughty. Let some pact or truce be made without delay. Let the telephoness admit for one moment that, though I am beneath her patronage, I *am* one of the obscure contributors to her salary. Let us be friends without ever seeing each other. Visibility would, I am convinced, end amity, and I should not, as the old lady once said, be sitting here "like Patience on the Monument."

Now, the odd thing is that though this Telephonesian War continues all the day, it ends at night, when it is the man's turn to handle the accursed thing. Then there are no mistakes, no delays, no wrong numbers or disordered lines, no supervisor. A halcyon calm ensues. I speak confidently as a gentleman to gentleman, and not as gentility to gentility. The nerve-wreck vanishes. Richard is himself again. The eternal feminine, it is, that undoes us. When, as Wordsworth so pathetically puts it, Lucy (for that I love to imagine is her name) "ceases to be" and "whirls round in earth's diurnal course with rocks and stones and trees," a great peace falls on me. I forget the campaign of the glaring and wearing day. Bitterness is merged in bivouac: I enjoy an infant's slumber, and am in charity with all men. Then the telephone sings the tranquil hymns of George Herbert, and, to quote Wordsworth's heart-breaking climax:

> ". . . But oh!
> The difference to me."

XXII.—A VERY NEW NEW-RICH

Let me introduce to your notice Mr. Albert Few. From the age of thirteen he had to toil for his living, and he has achieved comparative wealth by the most honourable persistence. From being a messenger-boy for a firm of repute, he has risen to be a junior partner. From indigence to competence he has set a splendid example of large-hearted, free-handed self-reliance. He now inhabits quite a nice suburban villa with "Dumpoona" painted in a subdued green on its gates. He calls his spare-room "the guest-chamber," a term which imparts a feudal flavour; Chaucer might have used it. He is never weary of helping others; he lives below his means and above his hopes. He is a solid, God-fearing man without a spice of cant or rant in his composition. And he is not self-complacent, still less self-righteous; there is nothing of the Pharisee in his leaven. He is humble and happy, and there is no one, high or low, that knows of his existence who does not always respect and often esteem him.

Not long ago he won three thousand pounds in a "Ballot" for a charity. Not one penny of it did he keep. He at once distributed this windfall among his poor relations and unknown, unbefriended strangers into whose hapless plight he had carefully and tenderly inquired. I do not know of a better man with less pretensions and more merit than Mr. Albert Few. He joins no political claque, seeks no meretricious renown, is absolutely unself-consciously, practically, and most sympathetically human. How different is he from the pushing parvenus who battened on the War! How different from the rabble around him who buy jewels on doles and then flagrantly denounce the idle-rich, who exhibit the same vices retail as the worst "Society" does wholesale. On my word, I believe that England will eventually find salvation in such as Mr. Albert Few. He belongs to no particular class: in every class he is to be

found. He has striven hard never to belie his ideals, and, step by step, he has educated himself not only in book-learning but in genuine, generous humanities. He has a wide heart, envies no man, and is in the truest sense noble. If occasionally he drops his "h's" what is this after all but an old Norman habit? William the Conqueror must have done the same.

Not long ago he lost his wife, the loved companion of his home and career. It is she who still sustains him: they are indivisible. He finds comfort in pursuing the same gentle, unalterable life, in doing good without observation, in honouring the dead by aiding and cherishing the living. When I read of the "class-war" between the much-paraded nonentities of the passing hour, whether they happen to inhabit palaces or hovels, I refresh my soul with the thought—or rather the feeling—of Albert Few. With all his transient limitations—derided by the lovers of Limbo—he is my idea of the Kingdom of Heaven. He takes no stock of hospitable well-doing, is barely sensible of it. Cultivated coteries might brand him a "Philistine." But he never worships Dagon, the fish-out-of-water god. His quiet perseverance has brought him fortune as a side-issue. He can neither be bought nor sold, he abhors self-advertisement, and so it comes to pass that people seemingly the most commonplace can prove to be the salt of the earth.

XXIII.—MISS THANK-YOU-*SO*-MUCH

Miss Thank-you-*so*-much—otherwise Miss Sophonisba Much—is a type and a character peculiar to the moment, and long may she wave! She proves that an attractive shop-girl can be courteous without being servile. So polite, indeed, is she that she almost puts one to the blush. Is there, I wonder, some Selfrod School where she and her sisters are trained in the art of being at once social and commercial? The male shop-assistant also knows how to serve without cringing, but he is much more inclined to assert his native equality. He sometimes (under provocation) loses his temper and may drop his manner as he sheds the well-cut black suit, with which Messrs. Selfrod provide him, on his return home. He alludes sometimes to the errand-boy as "that young gentleman." And this reminds one of that old story which relates how Sheridan's grand-daughter, on being told by a genteel assistant in a Bond Street shop that the gentleman higher up the counter would shortly be in attendance, was met with—"Oh, cannot I be served by that bald-headed old nobleman in the corner?"

Miss Sophonisba Much has no such fits of forgetfulness. Like Charity, she beareth all things and is the unostentatious superior of her customers. I have even known her to say "Thank-you-*so*-much" when, at one of those orgied semi-annual sales, a rather rough female customer tested and *tasted* a reduced tooth-brush. But this, of course, was Sophonisba's irony. Whether you buy a penny-worth or a tenner-worth where she presides she repeats her formula like a hostess welcoming her guests, though in the tenner's case she may vary it by adding the word "very" before "much." She is a lesson to us all, a model of calm, smiling, alluring gratitude. I, for one, am convinced that the same charm attends her at home. When her little brother disturbs her "daintily" (is that the word?) shingled hair, she says, "Thank you *so*

much, Bill." She says it when her pretty frock is stained by the sticky sweets of her sisters; she says it when her mother asks her to do all the washing, when the omnibus, prematurely proceeding as she is trying to mount, jerks her into the mud.

What an addition she would be to the House of Commons! As the lady-member for West Ham, how she would smooth matters down. How her manners would shame the brawls between some of the Labour members and the previous speaker, whether spelt with a small "s" or a big. Nay, who knows if Royalty itself—but on this topic I dare not enlarge. And her graceful politeness is catching: it acts somewhat in the same self-answering way as the Church service responses. Each time that she says "Thank you *so* much," *we* find ourselves thinking, even if we do not say so under our breath, "We thank you *so* much, so very very much." Happy is her future spouse. Her home will be an ideal of thanksgiving and a temple of its service. I feel a better and more courteous man every time that I hear and see her. I feel how hard it is afterwards to face the rough-and-tumble of life, and can only hope that if she reads my rubbish she will be kind enough to repeat her refrain.

XXIV.—MINERVA OF THE POST-OFFICE

Dread goddess of the topmost desk,
Almighty, stern, unpicturesque,
I crouch before a gaze which spells
Deep mysteries through spectacles.

Thine is the wisdom, thine the powers
Dispensing P.O.O.s in showers,
With Licences. And thine, the clue
For much to do with Revenue.

To savers thine omniscience
Doth War-certificates dispense.
It scorns for squanderers to control
The devolutions of the Dole.

It gives or takes the cash, I wis,
Safeguarded by the Post-Office,
For which the poor are well content
To garner next-to-nought per cent.

War-Loans of many strange degrees
It threads and purchases with ease.
Of all that matters overseas
It holds the complicated keys.

Unto the agéd, like a nurse,
It gently pensions doth disperse :
Though some it, frowning, sends to bed
By proving them, *de facto*, dead.

While postmen heave disturbing bags
It never hastes or faints or flags.
'Mid stir and noise with iron will
It works in giglamped silence still.

I worship humbly. Oh, incline,
Of screeds interpretess divine,
To this unwholesome one of mine,
And bid me where and how to sign.

Blithe Muses at the lower end
Survey the stamps and condescend
To stay their giddy converse, and,
Unduly pressed, a stamp to hand.

Each of Apollo sings with glee.
" My boy," they sing, " he says to me."
Few of the vulgar public dare
Such madrigals to check or share.

E'en when coarse parcels weigh the scales
That ceaseless palinode prevails.
In ecstasies of purest joy,
" He says to me," she sings, " my boy."

But *thou* disdainest silly things
That urge love-frenzied chatterings.
What mean the Nine to thee the One ?
And what for thee is Helicon ?

August, in awful shade decreed,
Thy solemn oracles proceed.
One glance from that immortal face
Would sweep yon gigglers into space.

Their laughter, their descant profane
Invades thy sanctuary in vain,
O inaccessible, austere,—
But deaf, I fancy, in one ear.

XXV.—THE NEW WORKMAN

How odd it is ! Our workmen now seem nervously afraid
Of perfecting the smallest job in what was once a trade,
And this though—properly no doubt—inordinately paid.
Days are squandered in pursuing what painstakingly they won't,
And much longer in undoing what they obviously don't.
Yet all the day
They whistle gay
Refrains that ring the roundelay
Of " Over the hills and far away."

If any lock is easy and a novice's affair,
They make it difficult again—that is, if they take care ;
Remissness now in disrepair is rare beyond compare.
Should bursting boilers deluge bode, they sometimes down their tools
In communion with their Union and its philanthropic rules.
Yet, sure of pay,
They whistle gay
Refrains that ring the roundelay
Of " Over the hills and far away."

Never weary, always cheery, they will lay twelve bricks a day.
They would lay three score, like hens, and more if Unions let them stay.
But " As you strike it " by command is now their favourite play.
Unemployment means enjoyment, so the Agitators say.
While the taxes grind the axes, so Hooray, Hooray, Hooray !
Pray, though astray,
Still whistle gay
Refrains that ring the roundelay
Of " Over the hills and far away."

Most roads are weekly up in town, yet who will dare complain ?
It needs, you know, a month or so to get them down again.
All have leisure then to study broken pavement, open drain,
The roads are up, and merrily begins to shine the day.
Through the zigzags of the traffic stagger taxi, 'bus, and dray—
While your willing comrades perish, you some Union *must* obey.
So, come what may,
You whistle gay
That sweet, Arcadian roundelay,
Of " Over the hills and far away."

XXVI.—THE PROHIBITIONIST

Do you remember that line from Milton's " Paradise Lost "—" Of prohibition, root of all our woe " ? It must be confessed that the bard was not only a poet but a prophet. For who are the advocates of Prohibition ? There are the sincere prohibitioners, the political prohibitioners, and the oblique prohibitioners. The sincere champion of Prohibition is convinced that alcohol is the root of all evil. He sentences it, untried, to death. To drink the accursed thing is to perform the accursed things, and so even when any criminal achieves an accursed thing without alcohol he must be reprieved. The political prohibitionist is really unconcerned with the accursed thing. He only wants to take office through it. Though others may not drink of it, *he* does—" Lave in it, drink of it then if you can."

The oblique prohibitioner is a tool of the secret societies. He knows that by discontenting the masses he may achieve revolution at their expense. And then you get Pussyfoot and Co. who increase drunkenness by inveighing against it. Supposing that ten per cent of a northern population get fuddled and three per cent drunk, the statistics are twisted into giving Prohibition a false handle : in the name of sobriety, they demand slavery. There is also, and largely, a commercial prohibitionism. Its American advocates manufacture sweets, while its American victims absorb raw spirit. Thousands of officials are employed to preclude alcohol by admitting the worst alcohol on terms. This may well be styled public spirit. Moreover, too often the bark of the drink-denouncer is that of a dog in the manger.

Now let us come to close quarters. Mr. and Mrs. Worksup are industrialist hands in a northern city. Times are none too thriving, and Mr. Worksup imbibes more liquor than is good for him. He comes home and vents his superfluous energy by giving Mrs. Worksup a black eye. She defies him and melodramatically protects her progeny whom Mr. Worksup has never dreamed of assaulting. He is moderately drunk and fairly shamefaced after-

wards. Suddenly he swears off. He will not touch drink. What does Mrs. Worksup do? She assumes almost an injured air: she has lost her grievance. She says, "Why don't you hit me, John?" (sheltering her last infant) "I rather like it. I prefer an occasional black eye to no drink at all for either of us. We miss a drop of comfort, don't we? Saturday nights ain't like Saturday nights without it. And we used always to make it up and begin again. Don't listen to them beastly fellers who strike, and ruin us. Strike me gently, John. Do give me a blackish eye, and let us forgive and forget." Is this an unfair statement of the general feeling among the industrial inhabitants of a raw climate? I am arguing not from exceptions or deceptions, but from the average rule.

What is the alternative? We are to have an autocracy of cranks and slave-drivers, highly-paid hordes of censors without conscience. We are to be spied upon at home and abroad, and—inevitable consequence—we are to become privateers of poisonous liquor. Where is the sense or morality? I would rather see ten per cent drunk than a hundred per cent slaves, and two hundred per cent hypocrites. By forbidding liquor, you increase and deteriorate the bad side of strong drink: you destroy the good, genial side: you augment neither sobriety nor efficiency. You are like the man who foreswore tobacco to take laudanum. Let us be just to ourselves as well as to others. And if this invasion of personal liberty for political artifice or cosmopolitan dry-rot were to prevail, where could it stop? How about gluttony, how about ginger ale, how about beetroot, how about potatoes, how about cider? Specifics would be innumerable, and each of them would be a protected trade. You would become the serfs of cranks and conspirators. There would not be one unobserved moment in your lives. You would be prisoners in a gaol from which there was no delivery.

All this is utterly opposed both to freedom and morals. You would cheat, be cheated, and degenerate. You would play the game of your country's foes. The Fifth Monarchy men tried this kind of despotism and failed during the supremacy of Cromwell. The Socialists have tried it and have also failed. The Communists have never tried it, and in that regard would not fail. You would hand yourself over to Anarchy and be quenched. I prefer Mrs. Worksup's appeal: "John, give me another moderate black eye, I miss it."

XXVII.—GALLIO THE GOLFER

(*The New Indifferentist*)

"GALLIO cared for none of these things." Golf, I fancy, must have been Gallio's game. Privately, it is quite a good game, giving exercise to such as have passed the age of other games, and bringing the sexes together in the open air. But it is a game where each plays for himself and recounts his feats afterwards, with embellishments, to the Club. It is a game of self-absorption, and it cannot be called public spirited. It links us to little outside the golf-links; and Gallio would not have cared what went under so long as he won.

Nationally, it cannot be called patriotic. Had Germany prevailed, cricket would probably have been submerged, racquets would have been ignored, football would have been even more commercialized than it is nowadays, but golf would have survived as the game of a province. On the golf-links all nations are equal. Great issues were discussed there when Mr. Lloyd George taught M. Briand to drive a ball. Golf now occupies more space in the newspapers than once did even the Napoleonic wars. Its contests are regarded as matters of prime importance. It stimulates home trade. But, as an imperial asset, where is it? Is it not the athletic side of the League of Nations? The new Bolshevist centre at Jerusalem will probably lay out golf-links in the valleys of the Jordan. Smiling Lord Balfour may tee off from one of its banks—in both meanings of the word—over the bunkers of Arab encampments. Isaiah seems to have foreseen this, when he wrote, "I will toss thee like a ball." We may yet read, too, of Kamineff and Zinovief playing (badly) at Geneva.

Seriously, is not golf, with its inherent indifferentism, the healthiest game that ever unconsciously sapped a nation? What is England or Great Britain to golf? Gallio seems not

to care. But the cricketer, even in his over-professionalized plight, cares a great deal. Cricket is essentially a patriotic game and a social one, which golf is not. Wherever the cricketer plays, he plays for England, and each of the eleven considers the other ten, and yet golf seems to live for ever because it lives alone. You cannot think of it in the terms of a national anthem. It is not a game of action—rather it may breed wavering inaction.

And yet there is another aspect of Gallio the Golfer. His very indifference may often be far from cosmopolitan. It may spring from an ancient Roman or British characteristic—the settled, if stifled, conviction that wherever Imperial Britain goes, she shall have music, like the old woman with rings on her fingers and bells on her toes. The very apathy of the golfer may sometimes prove a strength. It may stand for unruffled pride. It may produce the Strong, Silent Man. He may even be an imperialist who impresses Britain on every less favoured nation. Why do so many who resort to the Italian Lakes spend so much of their time on the Menaggio Links and shut their eyes to everything else but the worship of the Golden Golf? Why do so many foreign hotels advertise both their golf-links and their English church, and this in the same breath? Across the Channel, golf is evidently regarded as temperamentally British. If Gallio ever played golf, it must have been because he was a Roman citizen who liked to feel cosmopolitan at home and imperial abroad. So even in this kind of apathy we may take comfort. Mr. Baldwin is thus unperturbed, so is Mr. Thomas. Every optimist who sends a pessimist to the golf-links overlooked by the Sphinx is equally undismayed. They don't care, and they do care. The world may crack, but its ruins will bury them near the eighteenth hole. Little red flags, too, will be smothered on the putting-greens, but all fear of them will have vanished. So let us swathe ourselves in our virtue and defy indifference, homœopathically, by ourselves remaining indifferent to it.

So concerning the whole theme, I commend this little disquisition on a type of character to such as believe that a nation is influenced by its games. Public-spirited games in mutual rivalry are a great bond between us and the Dominions. But athletics are one thing and acrobatics, however extraordinary, are another. The perpetual over-spectacularization

—if I may coin a long word—of great games, the transformation of them into hired shows, is acrobatic. It turns a free and generous competition into superhuman feats of strength or skill. And sometimes, in taking away our breath, it also takes away all interest in impending and vital struggles. It is an old trick of politicians in such days as these to divert the popular attention from the gravest issues by popularizing shows and dispensing doles. "Gallio cared for none of these things."

Gallio, brother of Seneca the Spanish-Roman citizen, was the Deputy of Corinth when St. Paul met him and poor old Sosthenes was "beaten before the judgment seat," while Gallio professed his utter indifference. I daresay that the Corinthian links were first-rate, and that Gallio, as a Spaniard, was naturally ultra-Roman. He is described elsewhere as excessively "sweet" in disposition. He disliked noise. All these broils between Greeks and Jews were a horrid bore, and Gallio was not going to worry about the essentials that seemed to him so unessential. We have a great many Gallios about just now. They fancy that they can play golf for ever. They neglect the immense conflicts of national life. They have a small post which they enjoy, a small insight which they magnify, a small income which they spend, and no foresight whatever. They imagine that they will play golf till the crack of doom. The Roman links will succeed to the Corinthian, and the Pompeian to the Roman. Only how dreadful it would be for these even-minded don't-me-cares if one morning they awoke to find themselves golfless. It is all so sad and yet so human. Indifference, like procrastination, is the thief of time. But an invariable indifference, however magniloquently masked, spells ultimate ruin. You cannot live on your capital for ever. Capital is what a nation needs. Income is what the individual wants. If you save nothing, where is capital? And if capital ceases, where is income? In that case a single thing is certain—starvation. For corn is only obtainable through exports. And if grain fails and hunger prevails, a suicidal revolution looms in sight. So Bolshevy believes, and so it acts, and will continue to act until it is hissed off the stage.

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XXVIII.—THE AUTHOR-ADVERTISER

It is a notable peculiarity of the period that Commerce attracts the Arts. We already have some really beautiful "Posters" to advertise liquids, travel, and comestibles. Long ago Millais initiated the departure by a charming portrait to popularize a soap, and it may be said that in a certain, or uncertain, sense the primitive Italians advertised religion, while some of their later Masters might, with qualifications, be regarded as the publicists of Paganism. Adornments by way of advertisements do beautify even when they cannot convince. Lately I have come across at least two cases where distinguished authors are recruiting literature for publicity. Certainly Commerce is the gainer, but are the Arts ennobled? Inspiration slackens if it is yoked to jobs. Decorative ingenuity always interests us, but what is there to raise us above, or waft us beyond, ourselves? If these combinations progress we may expect music and the drama to follow suit.

A motet with wind accompaniment might be composed for a motor-car, a violin obligato for some soothing violet-powder, a mass for a masseur, or a scherzo for some comic newspaper. And as Art became more lucratively welded to artifice, there is no saying whither the developments might lead, or who would be the conductor. Plays might be written for a sauce, a tooth-paste might animate the cinema. And, finally—which would be a step forward in the right direction—stalls and dress-circle, for the benefit of the Law Courts, might be booked during *causes célèbres*, and the same system on sensational nights might be applied to the House of Commons. If Commerce is to suborn the Arts, then the Law and our legislators might well thus retaliate with tit for tat.

But, to return to our authors. A novelist has written a puff for a restaurant, a man of letters is writing in favour of an autocar. There is no secret about it, nor need there be.

The whole transaction is completely above-board. The proprietors gain renown, the authors reward. The decks are cleared for action, and the writers fire away with their sybarite vintages or their across-any-country-in-ten-minutes. There is no harm in this. Everyone will like it. But does it benefit literature? A crushing retort may bring me to my knees—"Well, does your own beastly book benefit literature?" So then I must put my question in another form. Does it, however humbly, try to be literature? For literature is not so easily converted to these uses as painting. The painter can embellish anything: he is seen, not read. If he suffers—and one must suffer to be beautiful—he suffers from restriction of scope. No author, however, can embellish everything. He braces himself to this new vocation of being the town-crier.

So, without censure, I venture to doubt the policy of harnessing Pegasus to Trade. Perhaps I may be prejudiced, but I doubt it. It is quite true, of course, that, incidentally, in "Don Juan," Byron advertised Rowland's Macassar Oil. But he was not paid for it. On the other hand, if our authors can produce masterpieces in these directions, they are fully justified, and whenever they do so, I may be pardoned this good-natured protest.

Morally, there is this to be said: does the author believe in the *restaurateur's* choice cellars?—does he believe in the wonderful cars? If he does, well and good. And if he does not, is the transaction worse than the puffing of politics, the arts, authorship, and career? Are we all members of one vast, magniloquent syndicate for raising prices and promoting consumption? Advertisement seems to be the genius of an age which values quick results more than permanent beauty —still less majesty.

The Roman Pont du Gard, in its commanding isolation, is the best answer to the advertising author or artist. "The one remains, the many change and pass." But what is Posterity to a cheque?

XXIX.—THE NEW BLUE-STOCKING

(*Miss Lexham Speaks with Rather Breathless Enthusiasm*)

"BLUE-stocking!" When I read, as of course I have read, at Girlville College, concerning the mild Mrs. Chapone and the overbearing Mrs. Elizabeth Montagu—the first strutting about with Samuel Richardson on the pantiles, and the last demurely ingratiating herself with Dr. Johnson by discussions on Shakespeare and the musical glasses. And then of Sterne's sentimental Mrs. Vesey and Juno-like Mrs. Ferguson, of his patrician "Queen of Sheba," and, later, of gushing Anna Seward ("the Swan of Lichfield"), and finally of Mrs. Barbauld, I realize what blue bores those eighteenth-century blue-stockings used to be. They had no notion of being learned and lively and unself-conscious at the same time. Now, we of Girlville College have a very keen idea of this alliance, and we boast the strongest sense of humour. We are just jolly students, undergraduates who learn more of life in ten minutes than our male companions do in two years. We study hard—the whole of English literature in a term; half of the Anglo-Saxon roots in two terms; logic, English history, the Elizabethan poets and mystics in half a term. It is wonderful what we get through, and how little it damps our ardour. We are alive and dancing after a score of lectures and half a score of balls or theatricals. We dive into everything, and we swim triumphantly through it all.

Show me the male undergraduate who can do the same. Of course, he may row better, excel us in cricket and football, and float more forcibly on the athletic tide. He can follow the hounds, too, if he can afford it. We can't. But when it comes to an examination, where is he? And where are *we*? You cannot deny that we are ever so much more up to date than the average man. A fig for your eighteenth century! And a fig for every century's pompous taskmasters. I like the

Elizabethan and Jacobean periods the best. They were such lyricists of the moment, such dramatists and mysticists of eternity. . . .

This is a jolly age, too, only it has no style. I like style. It is the gesture of the mind, the fashion of the soul, and the gymnastics of the body. My best friend Cornelia Squails has style. I must read you her essay on " Rebellion as an Art "—killing ! And then her " Analysis of Keats "—so full-blooded ! And her " Lawlessness of Law," which makes short work of all the Realists—topping ! You have no idea how we hum at Girlville. . . . Those proctors who caught us without cap and gown were awfully decent. They know how unbecoming these mediæval remnants are. They let us off with a laugh, whereas poor Horace Wangleby of Trinity got it hot by waiting all night in the quad of Queen's—a privileged quarter, you know. They nabbed him in the end, though. How silly it was of poor old Tennyson to speak of us as " *sweet* girl-graduates." We could have taught him a thing or two, I can tell you. Of course he had a good style, but he was so sentimental, so sugar-and-watery. A great passion I can understand, but not milk instead of cream. He has written some jolly good songs for all that. . . .

We are going to act " Hamlet " this term. Cornelia makes a ripping Hamlet, and you can see at once how much *she* would have liked to kill the King at his prayers. Only, of course the nervy Prince never really could *do* anything. I am to be Ophelia. A wretched part, for underneath all her little tendernesses, she was such a double-dyed minx. My tutor is to play the ghost. She is very like one. . . . Give me old Professor Scoffton for lectures. His humour is so dry. He says that most of the dons are donkeys, but that the vice-chancellor is Balaam's ass, and is always stopping dead short in the high street of intelligence ; there are so many angels in his way. So he is. He refused to allow us to act Wycherley the other day. As if we could not teach Wycherley a thing or two. . . . I have become awfully theological this term. How the old theologians curse each other ! Did you ever read Milton's abuse of all who disagreed with him, or, further back, Luther's of Henry the Eighth ? Regular Limehouse, and most exciting. . . .

I think Mary Purge will win the tennis match this year, and we may do quite well on the river. Cornelia thinks of standing for Parliament at the next election. She is an Independent Universalist, and I think will form a party of her

own. She is a nailer at parties. . . . I have joined our debating society. It is great fun. I am going to propose at our next meeting that "This age is the greatest." So it is. You can do what you like better in this than in any other which I have studied. And you can do it more nicely and with less fuss than in any other. All that you have got to do is to stick to it, and then it happens. I want my people to see this, only they are such old stagers. I'm downright fond of my people, but they do stick in the mud. . . . I am looking forward hectically to the Commemoration dances which are real antidotes for University humdrum. Otherwise Camford is rather like the Sleeping Beauty. . . .

There is an awfully nice girl here, the daughter of a coalheaver who has educated herself and knows everything. She got an article printed in last month's *Everlasting Review*, and it was headed "All about God," by Jane Stockwell. She is most original, and is going to write another on the Immortality of the Soul. The Soul, she holds, is the Body of the Spirit. P.S.—I have been asked by my friend, Angela Bonniton, to stay with her family in the Hebrides next vac. Her father is the most humourous man I have ever met. His stories make you simply die of laughter. Sometimes he forgets them, and then his wife—one of the very best—reminds him. She has a ripping memory, but I think that some of her husband's stories are really hers. That often happens, because men usually bag things from women, and women are far too generous to say so.

Angela's brother is *such* a good sort, and very humourous also. He knows exactly which stories belong to one parent and which to the other. Some, he has discovered, really belonged to his great-grandparents (which is the way with property), but he is far too well-bred to say so. His father looks up to him dreadfully, but his mother looks more up to Angela, who is the greatest help in arranging the house. Fourteen of us are going to stay with them, and there are only four spare bedrooms. But Angela will manage it all right, she is so clever. . . .

XXX.—THE NEW TAXPAPER

We live in times when to pay taxes is almost as much a profession as to collect them. With this difference, that, unlike the collector, the payer goes unpaid. Year by year the meticulousness and redundance of the various tax-demand-forms increase by leaps and bounds. Poor bewildered people who cannot contribute towards employment by paying others to fill up their forms for them are reduced to the verge of insanity. Hard-working folks who fill up their own forms have to forgo a deserved holiday by being compelled to afford the required details, the demand for which pours in sometimes from several overlapping quarters. One of my tradesmen once told me that he never paid his taxes till the third application arrived —he was too busy. The irate tax-collector swooped down on him and asked why he had thus to wait for Revenue-dues from a man of substance. "My dear sir," was the reply. "Just reflect a moment. I am actually doing you a favour, for unless a well-salaried tax-collector were obliged to call thrice, he would not be wanted at all. So I am really encouraging and propagating your profession."

I need not enlarge on a theme which so touches the hearts and homes of men. But I venture to draw up a few possible questions that might actually be asked on these forms if the present drift of involved inquisition should persist. Here are some specimens :

Questions That May Be Asked

I.—Are you a widow? If so, state (1) How many times you have been a widow? (specifying the several dates). (2) How did you become a widow? (3) Do you intend to remain a widow? If so, give the dates, if any, of your several engagements since your last widowhood to

intending or intended husbands, and their names and avocations, if any; also whether any of them are widowers or have been divorced. (4) Have you ever been divorced? If so, give full particulars. (*See* Note 18, Widows' Regulations Act, Section 9, Sub-section 58.) The Commissioners reserve the right of calling on you to produce your certificates of marriage, if more than one. A housekeeper to a deceased single gentleman will in no case be regarded as his widow.

II.—State your business or profession, if any. By "business" is meant any ostensible trade, whether it brings you in any annual profit or not. The Commissioners reserve the right of assuming that it does. By "profession" is meant any calling that during the financial year you profess. You must be careful to give your actual profession, or professions, for the financial year. If they have been changed during that period, you are to state (1) how often, with the dates of the several occasions; (2) how frequently, with particulars; (3) how many times. A professed bankrupt may not describe himself as such. Bankruptcy as a profession is not within the meaning of the Act (*see* Note 22). If you have no valid business or profession, write "None" alternately or respectively. You are not to write "Gentleman," as it has no commercial or professional meaning. If you are a peer with no professed occupation, you are allowed so to describe yourself. A directorship is a profession within the meaning of the Act. In all cases where any peerage or baronetcy has been conferred for any consideration, state (1) for what consideration, and whether partially or entirely; (2) to whom such consideration was paid or rendered, and on what terms (*see* Note 13 on the effects of the Honours Agency Act).

III.—As regards "Residence." You must be careful to particularize all the abodes of which you are the owner and/or occupier whether for permanent or occasional habitation. A boat, caravan, yacht, disused railway-carriage or bathing-machine will be counted as a residence within the meaning of the new Act (*see* Note 30, Sub-section b,) whether rateable or not by each borough or parish where successively it may be situate. If, however, you have no settled abode within the purview of the Statute (*see* Note 25), but dwell in an unsheltered condition—(1) in a ditch, (2) by the sea-shore or on a common within the meaning of the Act, (3) on some pavement or pavements, or in the covered porch or entrance of another person's

house, (4) in a workhouse—state precisely (*a*) how you have been deprived of any roof or roofs, (*b*) how and when you have come to be chargeable to any parish or parishes (if more than one), enumerating their names and the date or dates of your reception by them.

IV.—For the financial year (*see* the New Act, Section 502, Sub-section 1040) you are compelled to give a true return of your and your wife's (if any) total expenditure and *debts* with their corresponding vouchers. And, if you are liable to super-tax, which of itself is a minor offence under the New Act (Section 620) punishable by a proportionate fine, you are to add the expenditure and sums aforesaid to Schedule 50K of your income-statement, without any deduction of the fine imposable as aforesaid. A full and accurate return must be made of all these items within three weeks from the day before you receive this demand note. For penalties from failure to understand any of the above-named rules, enactments, and provisions (*see* Note 76 and consult the New Statute, Section 84, Sub-section 560.)

PART III

ODD NUMBERS

I.—THE FAUX BON HOMME

No one deceives us more cruelly than the sham good fellow. Iago is his prototype. He is so ingratiating, so agreeable and rosy, that you believe in him at once. He is a delightful acquaintance, but you mistake him for a friend. That is where the cruelty comes in. There is nothing like a real friendship, and his is a counterfeit. He stabs your heart.

He does not mean to do so : it is his nature and he cannot help it. He wishes to please all, though he can feel for none. He has no heart himself, and if he stabs yours, it is from a sort of subconsciousness that thereby he may gain a heart for himself. If he could get it and thus replace the void within him, he would soon cure the wound and become the proprietor of a really sound heart. Science performs miracles, but will any mechanism enable that stolen heart to beat inside his body ? I doubt it. And this would prove his punishment.

For years you have known his pleasant face, heard his good stories. For years he has sat at your board and enlivened it. Sometimes he asks you out to the theatre, and by some trifling accident you generally pay. But that is nothing—only a sort of cheerful absent-mindedness. Then suddenly the thunderbolt of disillusion falls on you. Some kind friend tells you in strict confidence what he knows that the false good-fellow has said of you behind your back. When the champions of a political party do not believe what they profess, the party is in a fair way of being ruined. And so it fares with parties social. In heaven's name let us speak good of someone behind his back.

Two *traits* always distinguish him. He is brisk, and he is never a bore. He is not one of those languid, hesitating men who will walk with you up and down Bond Street for half an hour wondering from which tobacconist he had better buy some new cigarettes, and then again wondering whether we

should take tea at his club or at some cheap restaurant. He does not drawl out "*I* don't know" about most things. Nor is he ever a monomaniac who can speak of nothing but the bee in his bonnet. He never loses either time, temper, or attraction. He will enchant you by the way in which he extracts something out of you or impels you to believe that he has known and admired you from boyhood. His goodfellowship is indeed a trade, on the profits of which he ought to pay income-tax. He has known everybody and everything, and is the most tolerant being alive. Only, if you are not in the first flight, he lets you down, and will blackball your dearest friend at your club. That is all.

II.—THE MAID OF NO WORK

She is a *fausse bonne femme.* You engage her as a treasure with the very best recommendations from those mistresses who are anxious to part with her. She is capable, of good appearance, and plausible beyond belief. For a time you believe in her as an actual servant. But, step by step, she shows you that she will do anything but work. At times you are bold enough to hint that something has been neglected. Even then, she who has been in great houses only replies by contrasts. The Earl of Somebody never liked things done as you like them. Sir Nobody Something always preferred to do so-and-so himself. The sort of thing that you tentatively desire was never approved of in Park Lane. In fact, so cleverly does she parcel out her own irresponsibilities among the grand and glorious that you begin to doubt whether you can ever be in the right.

And then, besides the "brother," who perpetually sups on you, she has a real sister, and no mistake—a damsel so captivatingly apparelled that she puts us all to shame. That sister is her everlasting excuse for shirking service. Her sister is very delicate and wants her to go with her to the theatre. Her sister is constantly being married, it would appear, simply to humour your servant's natural wish to get out and be her bridesmaid. Her sister is in a decline, and she must take her to the hospital. Her sister is in sore need of good port, and your cellar suffers. Your crockery is always being smashed, presumably for that sister's benefit. In fact, what with her "sister" and her "brother," she is a very neglectful and extravagant maid.

At first you cannot perceive this, so diplomatic and insinuating is she. She lends such an air to the house and is so well equipped with smiles and excuses. But at length the harsh truth is borne in upon you. She toils not, neither does she spin, but her raiment is exquisite. And when one evening we return to find her "brother" half-seas-over in the area, whither he has

retired for a breath of air, and her sister dancing a *pas seul* to two gramophones, it breaks her heart. She parts from us not in anger but in sorrow. We are unworthy of her costly radiance. Like a butterfly, she roves from flower to flower and exhausts them. But one day there will be no more flowers to suck dry, and she will betake herself to the mannequins and march with the rest in some procession at an advertising *Thé dansant*. Her brother will not be there.

III.—THE BELLE LAIDE

WHAT is beauty without charm ? The Belle Laide is so charming that you must needs think her beautiful. With a perfect figure, an expressive face, and eyes that are in themselves a literature, she can give at least a quarter of a mile to any competitor in any mile race for ascendancy ; she is far removed from the neutralities who have " such pretty hair and such a good heart." I believe that Helen of Troy and Cleopatra of Egypt were like her ; I know that Madame Du Deffand was, and, on a far lower stage, Becky Sharp. I would run to the edge or end of the world merely to fetch her gloves—if her white hands were not so critically eloquent that it would be a sin to drape them. I fear that in this age there are many fewer of her type, and still fewer of her fascinating character, than there were in that overwhelming once-upon-a-time.

Women seek after beauty and assume it even if they have it not. The plain-beautiful belle, now so rare from a scarcity of distinction with interest and intellectuality without arrogance, does not often brighten our horizon. She is more evident in France than in England, which a century and a half ago abounded in her. Look at our eighteenth century portraits. Are not half of the best among them presentments of La Belle Laide ? Like Charles the Second's courtier she is never in or out of the way. She knows how to bring out the best of everyone and to inspire those whom she never makes to feel awkward. She is the wisest adviser, the frankest friend, the most perceptive comforter, that any man of intelligence can prize. And even men of small intelligence believe themselves talented in her presence. What charity is in the spiritual sphere, she is in the intellectual sphere. She is spirituelle—an *esprit*. And she is instinct with tradition. She looks at all the modern impertinences of life and letters through the lorgnette of centuries. When she smiles, her whole face is transfigured. No one can

smile with such mysterious insight as La Belle Laide, not even Leonardo's La Gïoconda. That smile shames the vapid simper of our fashion plates. To know her is a conservative education.

And the best of it is that you never wholly plumb her depths. As a rule, most pretty and some handsome women show all their goods in the shop window, leaving a general impression of only being a quarter of an hour old. Not so our plain belle. There is an immense storehouse behind her counters of converse, and she brings forth wares new and old from its shelves. How seldom is she married till she has passed her meridian. It takes her long to accept a husband, much longer than the over-renowned Portia. And surely it is curious that Shakespeare's long gallery of women heroines does not include, so far as I can remember, a single Belle Laide, for "Hermia" can hardly be counted. One surely must once have derided him at some awkward moment which the arch-master of human nature never forgot. Or did she never pass or cross his way at all, though her type existed among the Elizabethans? Who can say?

IV.—CATS AND DOGS

MANKIND, as a whole, may be divided into Cats and Dogs. There is the dog-like man or woman, and the cat-like. Of course, there are both shades and blends between the two, but the main contrasts enure. You may descry their lineaments on many a famous face. The cat smiles and lies in wait, the dog laughs and loves. The cat slides, the dog walks. The cat is our cupboard-minded caresser, the dog our friend and companion. How odd it would seem that throughout the Bible the dog is always a fearsome creature, were it not known that the Syrian dog was a starved jackal. Yet the dogs licked the sores of Lazarus, while in the old Italian pictures of the Last Supper a cat is the attendant and emblem of Judas.

In the dog generations there are the dog and the watch-dog. The dog is faithful and alert, though possibly both obtuse and unrefined; the watch-dog presided over every Latin hearth with the superscription of "Cave Canem"—the dog was there to ward off the cat. The dog is a sturdy safeguard. The cat of every degree—from tabby to Persian—though caressing, is sly and faithless, but there is always something much more eery about it. It harks back, peering into the primeval Egyptian darkness. It is the goddess Pasht, the uncanny goddess, not seldom coupled with ill-luck. What is Anubis to Pasht? But he is a much older deity, indeed the oldest of the whole pagan over-world, and this signifies that when nations are struggling for existence, the canine qualities are indispensable to survival. It is not a feline tooth but a canine faith that adheres to man. Long afterwards, it is, that the cat comes into requisition. War makes dogs, protracted periods of spurious peace bring the cats into the open. For Pasht is in essence a parasite, as Anubis in essence is a defender, and especially when he is the mastiff on the hearth. It is pretty clear that most of the great men of action have been dogs, and that a great

number of illustrious academics have been cats, including one of whom, most erroneously, it has been said that his father was a mule and his mother a stained-glass window.

In authorship, too, whether we approve or disapprove, this rough-and-ready psychology is a main clue. On the whole, Fielding was a dog, and Sterne, with all his charm, a cat who could be a spitfire. Voltaire, who had some grimalkin qualities, was, in the main, an over-polished dog, whereas Rousseau was an unadulterated cat. In war, Marlborough was a dog-cat, but Wellington a dog, pure and simple. And to retrace our steps, Julius Cæsar was a complete dog ; in his youth an over-gay one. Brutus, a bull-dog ; but both Cicero and Catiline, though such mutual contrasts, were absolute cats. I leave to the perceptive reader any application of this root-discrimination to more modern examples.

Queen Elizabeth and Catherine of Russia were unquestionable dogs ; Catherine of Medicis was a thoroughbred cat. And the cats, who are so much more antique in pedigree than the dogs of whom they are envious and to whom they are supercilious, too often get the better of the dogs during the interludes of history. Indeed, I have my doubts whether the Serpent in Paradise was not really a cat who knew that, by persuading Eve to eat the apple, most apples in the future would be his. This cat-and-dog touchstone is an indispensable key to character, whether in private or public life. And the great mistake of modern politicians is that they are always begging a cat to insure a dog. Cats never regret anything, but dogs do, and this is why no mythology of any nation ever mentions a cat as following its owner into the next world. There is a lying-in-wait expression on every cat's countenance which bodes ill in bad times to those *on* whom more than *with* whom it lives. And it is just this demarcation from the dog that will not stand the test of immortality and makes one doubt whether the cat has a soul. You must watch cats away from human company to appreciate them.

V.—THE HYPERBOREAN

THERE exist bores so intense as to deserve the title which heads this crayon. In a sense, everyone is a bore to someone, because everyone is a potential bore—even to himself. There must be a great many bores in the immense chain that connects them with one who is not a bore, just as the entirely unselfish person is, as it were, to blame for so many who are entirely selfish. But some bores are such Goliaths that their boredom is not relative but absolute. If Boswell had not fastened on Johnson as a hero, he would by all accounts have been a comparative bore, but he did find his fine point of adhesiveness, and thereby became the reverse of a bore—indeed a genius.

What constitutes a bore ? There are many answers, but one, I think, comprehends them all. He is a monopolist with a monotone. He annexes some little local province of would-be interest without giving anyone else a chance of travelling through its adjoining territory. Some—the minor bores—can only discourse of what entrances them but may depress others, their hobbies, their ancestors, their prepossessions or possessions, their prejudices, their motives. And this may be why Shakespeare's monologues which represent unheard thoughts are so enlightening and stimulating. The super-bore, the Hyperborean, may be, and often is, clever enough in his way : dullness is not the test of a bore. Macaulay's eternal monologues in country-houses made him a bore of brevet rank, though no talker or writer was ever more brilliant. Nay, because he was brilliant overmuch and overoften, he belonged to the Hyperboreans. The grosser bore may be evaded. We flee at his approach and bid him a fugitive good afternoon. He has no light artillery to defend him ; you owe him the chivalry of flight, though even to flee is to yawn. But sparkling bores like Macaulay have countless auxiliary forces always at hand to suppress the least

show of resistance, however passive. His perpetual supremacy would wear out a stone.

He is never recorded, however, to have read his compositions aloud, so I may in all humility surpass him. I am guilty of this atrocious extreme of boredom. I know that I am wrong, but I cannot help it; it is part of my being to read my poor efforts in literature aloud. In the first place it helps you (which is very selfish) to hear how they sound. In the second, you can judge the effects, whether soporific or otherwise, on the average man. It is wonderful at such moments to observe what pressing engagements people have; nothing interests them more than you and yours, but they have only two minutes to spare, and I grieve to say that even the two minutes' rule is greedily accepted and exceeded. "I always hear best with my eyes shut!" exclaims Dugald Dalgetty in Scott's "Legend of Montrose."

Of course no woman, very rightly, will listen for a moment to anyone who reads things aloud, though they themselves are often known to read their own correspondence aloud over the breakfast-table, always prefacing the family recital with "My dear, what *do* you think he or she says? But, naturally, I told him or her," and so on. I must confess that when in a quandary for listeners I have sometimes strolled into my bank and read a thing or so to two courteous clerks who look saintly enough to be martyred with a countenance seraphic as is St. Sebastian's in the pictures. Luckily my handwriting is so bad that I am unable to decipher much or torture them for long. I suppose this inhuman intrusion is the limit. It is needless to point out that one might read one's compositions aloud like a beggar to any bystander, but this would be of no practical assistance to the author and might prove an expensive mode of subjecting one self to insult. I doubt if even the crossing-sweeper (who is rich) would be patient.

There is a quaint story of the eighteenth century quack, Dr. Graham, who, for a time, instituted mud baths at Bath as a means of obtaining credit by faith. One of his dupes—a poetaster—immersed up to his peruke in the ooze, found himself neighboured by a well-known critic. With great difficulty he extracted a manuscript from his pocket and forthwith inflicted it on his rigid fellow patient. I have a great sympathy with this poetaster.

In these hasteful days when everyone whirls by one, very

few can have the luck of such priceless opportunities except clergymen. Sunday after Sunday, they can be our guides, philosophers and friends without fear of interruption or dissent. This is one of the great privileges of the cloth. They can hear themselves for a solid half-hour, even if, as rarely now happens, they read someone else's sermon. But has it ever occurred to you how painful it must be for the deaf to occupy a pulpit? The others alone can hear. It is related of Dr. Warburton, the divine, who rose from an attorney's office to become chaplain to "poor Fred," Prince of Wales, and was a loud-voiced bully, that one day when reading one of his controversial books to his pretty second wife and arguing with her upon it, she had spirit enough to throw his chief work at his head, saying, "If you won't listen to another's arguments, perhaps you will listen to your own." This physical retort of hers may literally be said to speak volumes.

But many other branches of the theme suggest themselves and would require a Book of Bores, if justice were to be done. Persons who are always forgetting the point of their good stories, or telling stories without any, persons who are always explaining things, long-winded and small-minded people, the ejaculators of "I told you so," are mostly bores, especially when they congregate together in solemn association.

Take the bore-dinner-parties alone. To dine with bores, however estimable, is to die with them. They would not invite you, save from respect or convenience, if you bored them. And so far this is a compliment which ill deserves a churlish return But they take you as they take the champagne, to set the conversation afloat. The result is that the champagne turns flat or corked. You yourself feel a dead-bore, or, as the eighteenth century named it, a blue-bore. Yet one recompense can yet be yours. You have done a good action—the right thing in the wrong way. You have purged whatever boredoms you have committed, and if there are bores in heaven—which Heaven forfend!—this will be no ordeal. For Bores are the prime-promoters of self-sacrifice and you will have served your apprenticeship.

It is reported that a Red Indian once showed a white man the scalp of a bore. Questioned why he, a noble sort of fellow, should have thus wantonly deprived the innocent of life, he thus replied: "I believe in the immortality of the soul. I

killed him that he might reach the other world before I got there. In any case, I shall have less of his society than if he had been allowed to visit my wigwam so often as he insisted on doing. And, poor creature, his soul may improve in the great beyond, it may improve."

VI.—"TRESPASSERS WILL BE PROSECUTED"

People exist in this variegated world, not bores—far from it—but who guard some preserve of their own like the dragon of the Hesperides. That preserve they never obtrude on others, but they excommunicate any chance poacher on its fenced inclosures. You have only to mention the sacrosanct subject, whether it be political, artistic, literary, or athletic, and the iciest hush overwhelms the scene, a sort of conversational draught that forebodes pneumonia. The innocent victims of that awful silence are not confined to the mooters of generalities. You may mention a person or an illness of which our friends are self-constituted trustees. Some light feather may be blown from your mouth which is immediately turned into a heavy stumbling-stone. You hear that Jones has gone abroad. A grieved expression of restrained agony gorgonizes the countenance of your amiable listener. "No, not yet: he is to visit the South of France when he is strong enough for the exertion. But he is much worse than people think, and Sir Jonathan Tregithers told me only yesterday in confidence that he fears the end. And he is *so* patient, dear old thing, so considerate. One really ought not to speak of him till one can feel more at ease about him. If only you knew all the tragedy that has attended him, ever since he sat on one of those wearing Belgian Committees. He who was always so lively in his work for others is now a mere wreck. Only, promise me, no one must be told."

The conversation is immediately switched off on to some other subject. You are made to feel acutely that you have trespassed. Jones is a speciality, a protected import of the speaker. There are so many of these imports, and some of them seem protected by barbed wire. You perhaps mention some new book or play, unwitting that its author is a friend of one of their friends. Again, the solemn silence around that

placard intimating that all trespassers will be prosecuted—quite politely, of course, but nevertheless prosecuted. You have said the wrong thing about *their* thing once more. It is nobody's thing but theirs. This is very unfortunate. You feel well-nigh a burglar. And then some flippant observation of yours about a place, a person, a picture, a sculptured "Rima," a convincing reason, or subject, gives them actual pain. The pain is not paraded, but it is evidently present. A cathedral look comes over their faces. Once more you have trespassed: Trespassers, beware! A myriad treasures are in their sole custody—including perhaps some of your own friends whom they may have appropriated.

VII.—THE COLLECTOR

The collector, especially the small collector—is also one who resents trespassers on his field. For he usually expects to receive a cheque in his favour drawn by your Admiration on his Bank of Fancy. I am far from belittling the small Collector's instinct ; it is very natural and human. Enthusiasm lives on enthusiasm. I myself have tried to be a small collector all my life, so I may be pardoned for being proud of some hard-won discernment. The collector's instinct must have been primeval. Eve, surely, must have collected many apples since the Fall, to judge from the number of her descendants. Commerce, too, is only a much later phase of Collectomania. There is nothing that mankind will not collect, even buttons of varying periods. And in many ways this is a refining factor in civilization. It is the salvager of the centuries. Save for the collector, all the thousand things that image mankind and its background in all its phases would be lost. Their discriminated assemblage is in itself a school of taste.

The collector connects all epochs, and in this sense the Bible itself is the greatest as well as the divinest collector of them all. Again, the collector can be a great discoverer. He can prove that there is nothing new, from dolls to idols, under the sun—or under the grandson either, as the Georgian wit once remarked. Surgical instruments have been found at Pompeii that our great-grandfathers hailed as miraculously modern.

Once more, the good collector immortalizes beauty, and reveals her secrets. What was the Renaissance but such a super-collector of illumination ? Viewed privately, the collector—the man with a true hobby—may, if he is generous, enrich the nation by impoverishing his family, and this balance of counterpoise must be duly weighed. Or he may prove mainly a commercial collector, pondering prices more than values, profit rather than advantage, and " pedigree "

than pertinence. Furthermore, by the collector's habit, he may come to magnify petty distinctions and to esteem rarity rather than interest. How absurd are the collectors of first editions who deem that the presence of a "title-page" is of supreme import or adds the least jot of reality to romance. How ridiculous, too, is the figment that a "cut margin" impairs the lustre of a fine mezzotint. And lastly, a collector may by the stealthiest steps degenerate into a hoarder, a miser who is a mere collector of coins, or a false image-worshipper weighted with baubles. But without collectors, in all their gradations both art and history would sink into a chaotic flotsam and jetsam, the dead letter without the animating spirit.

I have seen and heard wonders in connection with collectors. One would go in rags rather than desist from his ruling passion. Another's abode was blocked by pictures. Even his bedroom was impassable for the litter. And another was astute beyond compare. He took a big house for the summer months where his keen eye fastened on two magnificent porcelain vases on the drawing-room mantelpiece. He kept his counsel, but eventually offered to buy the house for the sake of those vases. He did so and was fully rewarded.

The Collector is intimately contra-allied to the Connoisseur. There are three sorts of connoisseurs (just as there are three sorts of wedding-present-donors), the one whose choice is only anxious to disprove yours, another who thinks of his own taste but never of yours, and the third—a theorist—who cares little for what he imparts or to whom. Mercifully there is also the sympathetic connoisseur who wishes to protect you against yourself. He it is who frankly tells you "Venetian, seventeenth century," adding, perhaps, "'Cos I know."

And then there is the modern autograph collector by whom even the feeblest writer or artist is beset. There is one who not long ago truly honoured me by a request for my dubious hand-writing—no signature, but a composition. He had a vast collection of brilliant names, and naturally I felt flattered. He was a transatlantic poet whom other autograph-hunters must doubtless be imploring for his own effusions. And then he told me that he descended both from Chaucer and from the Plantagenets. I was much awed. But all the same he signed himself by a name very like Blodgeby. Somehow this reminded me of Dickens, whose surnames so often recall the homelier Roundhead ones, and I wondered why one so illustrious

should thus be named. His remote ancestor must, I fancy, have been an original *Mayflower* puritan, and it thrills me to feel that I possess his autograph.

Autograph-collectors are comparatively modern. No one collected autographs in the classical times, for so few who could write well were then heroes. But, if we reflect, this itch for autographs is a toll paid by curiosity to fame—the impulse of which is to see how badly authors, artists, admirals, and generals can write. Most of them do write very badly. Some of the greatest thoughts in the world are illegible. There is only one handwriting in our new world which, though commonplace, is undeniably clear. And that is the slate-manuscript of the Cinema. When it assures us that " Lord Sir Endymion Zooks " is about to abduct the millionaire's only child Miss Berengaria Binks, there is no more doubt about it than about the fishmonger's prices outside his shop. We know who is going to deport and entrap whom. I am not so sure whether if Chaucer, Ben Jonson, or even Shakespeare, in one of their soberest moments had scrawled the same announcement in the style appropriate to them, they would so have succeeded. Their autographs may have been artistic, but would they have been clear ? The autograph-hunter does not desire transparent handwriting. He collects the obscurity of centuries. Something which nobody can make out is his quest. His ideal is not a meaning but a maze.

And except for collectors of every kind where would the cataloguers be ? A history of these benefactors has yet to be published, and should be written. The difficulty would be that each age tends to revise the judgments of its predecessor. What used to be attributed to Michael Angelo is now apportioned to some contemporary that none but the newest " experts " know. What was accepted as a Botticelli is now accredited to Botticini, or the nebulous " Amico di Sandro "—" Sandy's friend." These minute families of unknown originators are certain to pullulate again as time proceeds. We shall one day be told of other and obscurer supplanters, and the whole world will not be able to contain the fresh certificates handed to the dealers. What a blessing it is that so few names of the great Athenian artists are recorded. Had they been so, we should have come to fancy Praxitiles a myth and Apelles an imposture.

VIII.—THE RECOLLECTOR

EVERYONE now writes his or her Recollections, and usually about the same old folks and the same old tunes. I write my Recollections (and Reflections), thou writest, he or she writes, let us write. The mode suits every conjugation. Why is this? Those who possibly mislike contemporaries adore their predecessors, and religions have been reared on ancestor-worship. We like to know those whom we have not known, and therefore—for who knows himself?—both author and reader like also to know about themselves. Yet how few of our Recollections are really or incidentally self-revealing? I admit that such familiarity might breed respect, and that respect is the last thing that most of our modern Recollectors require. Now that I come to think of it, this is not a feature peculiar to modern self-chroniclers. Respect was not the butterfly that Montaigne loved to chase. Respect was not Mr. Samuel Pepys' main ingredient in the unsurpassed dish which he served up to mankind. Rousseau's "Confessions," with all their falsetto-sincerity, do not aim at Respect. Nor certainly do Casanova's unblushing adventures.

The only two intimate self-revelations that seem to beget some Respect are perhaps Coleridge's "Biographia Literaria" and "The Diary of a Nobody" by the brothers Grossmith—those two poles of amusement combined with instruction; and I know which of them is the likeliest to survive. But the Respect which they engender is passive rather than active. Let us not therefore ungratefully reproach Recollectors, if their self-revelations do not compass Respect. One may relate what an adventurous little boy he was, how he was always trying to kick over the traces, how he became everything by turns and nothing long, until he met a rough Captain on a tramp-steamer who assured him that he had only to write and he would become famous. He did write—he is famous; but he has never achieved anything active since. How can one thoroughly

respect any man who has never done anything active? He may respect himself, but that is quite a separate matter.

Another (and this is a common practice) relates his adventures in the wilds after a sudden reversal of fortune. So far you respect him deeply. But then he has to take to the pen. From the moment that peril is exchanged for the pen, the whole tone is lowered. How can one respect any man who only prattles about what others have or might have done? Still another writes about all the ambassadors that she has ever known. She reveals delightful mysteries, late monarchs are milk-biscuits in her hands, but directly she ceases to be in the slightest danger, the Respect which is her due seems to vanish.

Once more, a cultivated lady with an illustrious father introduces us to the smallest talk of the greatest Victorians. An accomplished actor takes us behind the scenes. Neither of them have, under any circumstances, been beset by brigands, or have smarted under unpleasant reprisals. *Can* one respect anyone who has not once, at least, in their existence, been nearly murdered? No wonder, then, that most of our Recollectioners tells us so little about themselves. All of them, I will not doubt, have moved through hazardous escapes by flood and field, but how very few care to recount them! What sparse Reminiscences of Othello are published, how those of Desdemona abound! Here is the horrid truth about an age which talks so much and is apt to do so little. I except, of course, all travellers, air-men, Everest-climbers, most soldiers, and polar-explorers, though even these are inclined to be less unreservedly daring than of yore; our Respect drops half an inch of the scale. Clearly, we Recollectioners must begin again. Like Baron Münchausen, we must let ourselves go. We must be always inventing the supernatural and congratulating ourselves on our victories. Then others will respect us. For myself, if I ever sink to Recollections again (where luckily I was taken to task for no self-betrayals), I shall depict everything which I failed to do in the vain hope of winning everlasting Respect.

One feature about Recollections should not be omitted. The first thing that a Remembrancer does on the publication of a Co-Remembrancer's volume is to look for his own name in the index. To err is human. It is not vanity which prompts the search: no, it is the craving for self-respect. If you are

mentioned respectfully, this increases self-respect. If you are not, you feel more self-respectful than ever. The offender is below contempt. So far are you from murmuring, that you tell him, when you meet him, how pleased you are not to be included in his golden book of Nobility and Chivalry. And if your neglecter is a lady, you grasp her by the hand and thank her warmly for the great honour that she has done you.

IX.—THE INTERLOPER

It is amazing how many cuckoos are to be met with in life, especially in its later springtide. Some are born cuckoos, some achieve cuckooship, and some—a minority—have it thrust upon them. The born interloper who upsets a family dwelling together in unity is the worst. I do not mean the hungry cuckoo who insinuates itself till it steals your nest, nor the chance cuckoo who comes to stay with you for a month and somehow contrives to stay with you for a year. Nor do I mean what may be called the friendly cuckoo who strikes up a great friendship with other people's children, as why should they not? These varieties are comparatively innocent, and the last of them often a source of much happiness to all. But I mean the designing alienatress of home-affections who coils round them, shedding unholy spells. The Serpent in the Garden of Eden thus became Eve's bosom-friend, and, if Scripture had only recorded it, was possibly a supplanter of some true friend of the universal mother.

For Miss Endor, as we may name her, seldom works directly but usually through popular intermediaries to whom, with foresight, she has first managed to become endeared. She does not, as some of her artless sisters do, sit down absorbent in some peaceful household, but she calls to it from afar, till, like a sleep-walker, the inmate comes to her half-unconscious. She is the subtlest of witches. And what does she want? Her instinct is for domination. She wishes to engross others not for their own happiness but for her dark purposes. I know one fascinatress who begged the victim that she was striving to bewitch to let her comb the long tresses of which that younger woman was proud. She went on combing them for two hours till her prey grew frightened, and this was her incantation: "You give me life, electricity." Such are the Endorian devices.

In one way or another, though, as a rule, rarely quite so

abnormally, the average Miss Endor feeds on her new friend, imbuing her with her own ideas and in every direction weirdly, skilfully auto-suggestive. She sucks her life-blood. She cuts her loose from her moorings till perhaps she wholly engulfs her. As Disraeli said of Peel, her "life is one long Appropriation-clause."

The more many-sided and weaker-willed the world grows, the more the scope of her machination broadens. Homes have been broken up and hearts broken by Miss Endor, who will always declare that both she and her friend have been wronged. I have known her, in a milder form of this domineering jealousy, to come across the path of a brother whom she only encountered when he was grown-up, to rivet his devotion, to make mischief with the kind kindred who had reared him, to dictate his marriage, to send him off to a foreign land that he might offer to fight a supposed suitor for her hand, to invent hysterical fictions about admirers who had insulted her, to combine such madness and masterfulness as are not often united in the same person. And the worst is that whoever comes under her Circean wand adores her, will hear no word against her, deems her the wisest, the best, the most injured of womankind. The vulgarest shape that she will assume on a baser stage is displayed in many a will-suit where a bachelor or widower bequeathes all that was his to his housekeeper or typist. These lower Endorian makeshifts are not mysterious. They are natural developments by slow degrees. They are a business industriously pursued and purely mechanical—as mechanical as some of those metallic ladies who look like clocks just after they have been wound up. Such poor relations of the Endor clan have achieved their cuckooship.

But there are members of the Endor sisterhood who, as I have said, have cuckooship thrust upon them. There is the friend-companion of the well-to-do old lady, she who never finds rest for the sole of her poor foot, who sits by her side night and day and is usually addressed by her surname. Endor is a good sort of body. She will pack up for Lady Tut-Tutt, perambulate the Continent with her in forced and frail adhesion, look after the luggage and the douane, trumpet forth her persecutor's great deeds and virtues to all the Hotels, return with her home (ironic word!) to drive out with her all the afternoon, read aloud to her afterwards the new Life of a missionary Bishop, play double-dummy Bridge with her,

unpack her to bed, kiss her to sleep, and then sink exhausted on her own second-hand couch. Her salary is not large: her "poverty but not her will consents." How often has Lady Tut-Tutt observed to her, "Endor, when I go, you will find that I have done something for you."—Something! This she says whenever she feels unwell. So far, no Endorian schemes have entered the long-suffering heart of Patience Endor. But the hard, unlovely Tut-Tutt's relatives come bustling and buzzing around her sick-bed. The selfish cousin, the penurious niece, the profligate nephew.

Patience Endor somehow overhears their whispers on one of their vultural visits. Is it a crime that she should sometimes repeat their words to that angry, bedridden old lady? What she tells her is the naked truth. It is a shame that such mutually slandering wasps should be posthumously nourished. And who has done and endured so much for her as she, the unpatrimonial Patience? The family lawyer arrives. Lady T. is making a new will. Patience Endor is the sole residuary legatee. Everyone will remember the consequent law-suit.

Then there is a case far less trite, far more tragic—one of child-hunger. An orphaned cousin of the Endors, one who detests the family *traits*, goes out as governess to a luxurious widow's only child—a daughter. The mother cares little for the child save as a toy to be dandled in front of her fribbling friends. The governess cares for the child intensely, and her affection is fervently returned. The little thing sees so little of her mother, so much of dear Miss Deborah—darling "Deb."

She clings to her, loves her with that longing for motherhood which is as much childhood's heritage as motherhood's is childhood. Poor Deb.'s only lover, a gallant man, was killed in action. But for that grim fate poor faded Deb. might herself have been a happy mother of children. What if—but she drives the very thought from her, she stems the call of the Endor blood. The idea haunts her day by day and night by night. She has saved a trifle. What if she should abduct the child, fly to the uttermost parts of the earth and toil for that dear thing's happiness? Month by month she works out a plan for their exodus from Egyptian bondage. The widow grows jealous. Who is this person who has robbed her of the child's admiration—for it is no love that she craves. A prophet might tell her, "*Thou* art the woman." But few will believe the prophet who tells unpalatable truths. In a petulant moment

she gives Deb. notice to quit. Then, the temptation becomes irresistible. The plot has been perfected. The child is ready. At midnight—" the secret of the night "—they fly together, fly happily, fearfully together. The sequels remain for the reader to unravel. I have no space here.

There is also a far more innocent form of Endorship, if indeed it can so in any way be classified. There are persons who, as I have hinted earlier, will seize on your friends and appropriate them as if they had known and loved them for years. They will then speak to you about them as if *you* were the stranger (*you* in whose home they first encountered them), and they the intimates. They do not mean to deprive you, and indeed cannot often succeed in so doing. It is not design that prompts their wide-reaching arms to embrace all mankind, but at root it is the patronizing instinct. The pleasure of patronizing all and sundry is, unconsciously, their essence. And this is really a mild form of vanity, the step-mother of self-importance. To play the patron or patroness to presumed adorers is a pursuit which attracts many. Their net of patronage is ready for any fish that comes its way, and so it catches yours with the rest, and fancies its own particular pool to have been the fish's original domicile.

X.—THE OVER-SYMPATHIZER

THE best sympathy is often silent. A look, a pressure of the hand often feel more with us and for us than reams of black-edged notepaper or endless visits of condolence. For affliction is not a show for which seats are booked in advance, any more than is gratitude which is too frequently turned into the poor relation of woe: "Some people often sigh in thanking God" is a true line from Elizabeth Browning's "Aurora Leigh." I am not speaking here of mere obtrusiveness. The officious form the family of Paul Pry, and their meddlesomeness can only be comforting to themselves. What was it that the old Greeks found to be the besetting sin of their special Democracy? It was this very type of provocative officiousness, so that Paul Pry is a private instance of a public curse—the not minding your own business, through which simple virtue, you will remember, the old man of Kentucky amassed such a colossal fortune.

Very much, of course, depends on the sympathizee. Some who are bereaved may count on formalities and delight in being pampered like invalids and having all their tears poured into lachrymal bottles. How really absurd, however, this can be is best shown by those lines from an old comedy: "How do you do: how is your mother?"—"You cannot have heard; my mother is dead."—"What, *still* dead?" On the other hand, to hug a selfish loneliness in grief, to resent sympathy is an offence against life, against the graces of humanity. It is the rudeness of those who will never let anyone help them on with a greatcoat or accept the slightest obligation. And it must be owned that true sympathy in excess is an error on the right side, often a noble error.

The over-sympathizers of whom I am thinking have the best heart in the world. He or she really feels your sorrow and seeks to assuage it, but the type does not always know how to husband its unselfishness. It is lavish, and sometimes it

takes a mournful pleasure itself in the long letters which it writes and the long visits that it pays, with their interpolated hints and side-memories which sometimes redouble what they are meant to decrease. It has been well said that the consoler often airs a sort of superiority to the consoled.

Still another type there is—necessarily a person of infinite leisure—who never discriminates between occasions and turns his easy sympathies into a profession. Your little dog is run over in the streets. In comes your friend to share your loneliness without Fido. Or some other kind friend has told him that you have lost money. In he rushes again in his blackest-edged mood. He trusts that your misfortune will not cripple you, and he aggravates the very sting that may underlie the misfortune. Or you have lost an acquaintance—he treats you as if you had lost an intimate. And always he asks questions, sometimes, maybe, with just a touch of submalice. The fact is that gossip, not grief, is his objective : he typifies inquisitiveness in mourning. Moreover, he does to you as he expects to be done by. He takes offence if the sudden death of his canary escapes your memory. Further, he much likes to wear a solemn face. Seldom does he sympathize with joy; indeed he usually prefers to fear that in the height of happiness something may go amiss after all. From a universally contented world he would extract no pleasure, for he is a bee that feasts on the bitterest herbs. All these are more or less Job's comforters, that ancient family who, should you have sprained an ankle, assure you how much worse it would have been to have broken your leg.

But there is another and much rarer character who evinces sympathy in fashions unparalleled. He is a veritable Don Quixote superbly removed from so-called realities, and since I have known him, the two facts I am about to relate are no fictions. Whenever he grieved for others, he always longed to grieve alone. And forthwith he took to his bed. There was an instance once when, without any foundation, he fancied that he had offended a great friend over the luncheon-table. Immediately he sallied forth and could not be found. As usual, he had betaken himself to bed. The second instance is still stranger. When King Edward died, another friend came from a distance to see him, and was told that he was in bed. He went up and found him there—dressed in deep mourning. This may sound ridiculous, but it would not be so for anyone who really knew him. All that he felt, said, or did was intense

—exaggerated, if you so like to name it, but ever in the grand style. He was loyalist to the core, as he proved by fighting in the Boer War when his age should have precluded him from active service. But he would take no denial.

Our Don Quixote owned also still another peculiar habit. He never would allow that anyone was really well. If you visited him—he lived in the country—he would gaze fixedly at you and forthwith insist on administering a glass of his best liqueur brandy. He would not let you off. You were certainly unwell. Of course, you would not admit it —that was your native pluck, but unwell you certainly were. And, after the same manner, to all his acquaintances he was always attributing fine ancestral qualities of which each was absolutely unaware. It was the Norman or the Saxon blood that made them all so splendid. They did not know it, but so it was, and no plain remonstrance could convince him to the contrary. And yet he was a man of great perceptive endowments and of no mean judgment. After all, in overriding facts, he frequently dipped into truths, and thus Don Quixote's delusions were often justified in the end. Every one of them sprang from a chivalrous sympathy with men and causes which constantly shamed his shallow deriders. With him generosity was a passion.

XI.—THE CYNIC

"The height of ability consists in a thorough knowledge of the real value of things and of the genius of the age we live in" is one of De La Rochefoucauld's Maxims. Its profound author, like our own Hobbes, is popularly regarded as a cynic, and this particular maxim lies at the root of all genuine cynicism. The true cynic distinguishes values from prices and, so far as his own age is concerned, he perceives its drift, though he may not applaud it. But the cynic has been buffeted by the vulgar, and the pettiest and cheapest pretenders to the name have been dignified. No real cynic is superficial. He may not see the whole, but a part of it he sees very clearly. He is concerned with values.

One of the causes of the popular aversion is that most of us hate criticism: we refuse to feel uncomfortable. Another, and an allied cause, is that we go to a judgment seat as we go to a palmist, that we may hear someone flatter us for half an hour at a time. So both the unsentimental cynic and the sentimental —say Smollett and Thackeray—are more or less out of favour. Their thrones have been usurped by the retailers of smart paradoxes or the congenital attributors of base motives to everyone but themselves. Some of these are idealogues—those false idealists who sit still while others die for them. But the majority are We, Us and Company who, to repeat La Rochefoucauld, find something not unpleasant in the misfortunes of our friends.

Mr. Shavespear is such an arch-cynic of our moment. He lashes all conventions and unmasks all convictions. He shows us what fools all but he and his coterie are.

His whole irony works by suppositions—sometimes perhaps by impositions. Most of the "characters" through which he speaks are not flesh and blood at all; in your daily round you never meet them. They are just theories in fancy

dress. And their dress is not airily fanciful, it is an attire of fadfulness, not of fancy. For Mr. Shavespear is not imaginative; he is a whimsical doctrinaire—Heaven be thanked for the "whimsical"! So far from being a fine cynic, he seems destitute of any sense of values whatever, nor does he communicate sanity as the veritable cynic does. He has wit—it is his whip—but its function is almost epicene. It is that of neither sex, and its point is usually derived from contradictions to every rule. One great merit he owned till quite recently—briefness. This he has abandoned for the length and traffic of Oxford Street. And yet he is often both interesting and piquant in that mid-element of his which is neither earth nor air. What clogs his powers is the conceit of himself and of his conceits. This is the source alike of his inversions and his invertebrateness.

Another self-styled cynic is Mr. Errington who trumpets forth our degradations. Gilbert makes one of his delightful characters sing, "Do you think that I'm sufficiently decayed?" No depth of decadence will, it would seem, ever content Mr. Errington. We plunge from slime to slime in our mud-bath while sizzling fireworks of epigram coruscate above.

It fares the same with the Cynic as it fares with the Optimist and the Pessimist. The Optimist buries his head in the sand and shies at the unpleasant facts that one day may startle him into sense. Or he fixes his gaze on an illusory mirage in the wilderness. But the thoughtful Pessimist is often your truest Optimist, because, in descrying the future, his desire is to anticipate some security against looming dangers. So the true Cynic wishes to restore human perspective by being an honest appraiser of weakness. I will grant that his utterance must be spicy if any result is to be accomplished. No Cynic can afford to be dull in the market-place where prices so rarely correspond to values. But at least he will never mock at phantoms or stir up tadpoles from the dregs of dirt as a medium for purification. He does not mistake a sewer for a stream.

XII.—THE CASUIST

The Casuist is one whose reasons are pretexts. In the moral sphere casuistry gives pleasure the face of duty. Flora, for instance, neglects her family for her friends—a sort of refined self-indulgence. But she never feels or admits it. It is her duty to look after poor Emily who is ailing or poor Louisa who will be alone for a week. It never crosses her mind that her mother might also be ailing and lonely, and if it does she will have fifty arguments to prove that she fulfils both offices perfectly—that of the Home Office and that of the Foreign Office. In fact she is, as so many of us are, a dear self-deluder. Her best of hearts tries to live in two places at once. Then take Florizel. It is his duty to "see life." He has so been told by Professor Trymall. He is a serious young man. By "seeing life" he means nothing profligate. He is always conducting tours abroad for mechanics who will work ever so much better if they travel extensively. His father is an invalid, his sister is a cripple, his mother, luckily, in heaven. What are his domestic responsibilities? Nothing, compared with his duty to the mechanics. Besides, at great trouble to himself, he writes weekly letters to his father and sister, describing minutely all the places of interest through which he and the mechanics rove. His correspondence is a great bore both for him and their recipients, but he writes. Among its descriptions there is not a word of his flirtation—or rather "soul-affinity"—with the wonderful sister of one of the wonderful mechanics. She is the poetess-prophetess of the Labour Party, supreme in vision and ideas. His own hearth is not exciting. That is why Duty summons him elsewhere. Florizel is a casuist, and the sunburnt auburn prophetess knows it.

In the sphere intellectual the Casuist may be one who, being essentially nobody, is resolved to believe that somehow he is somebody. He could have lived a quiet, useful, trivial life

save for this volupty of unfounded ambition. But, as he has been known to remark, it is not for a racehorse to turn the rope that hauls up water from a well, as the donkey does, or used to do, near Carisbrooke Castle. He has no intention of being a drudge; it is so commonplace. He needs wings and is not afraid of singeing them as Icarus did by soaring too near the sun. He is elected a member of the Nonentity Club. His daring addresses elevate every heaven-born aspirant in that immortal Society. He and his colleagues write endless essays aiming at the reconstruction of Man, which are published at the expense of proud if mystified parents. But at least this Casuist has been a pioneer, and if eventually he is forced to play the menial part of the ass aforesaid, he can at least rejoice that he is Balaam's ass which an angel has turned from his round of routine.

Or the intellectual Casuist is one who has espoused a cause in which really he does not believe. He has to persuade himself and others that he does believe in it as an eternally true and righteous cause. Fifty arguments in favour of the plaintiff will back any brief on which is marked two hundred guineas, and "With you Sir Launcelot Guinevere," and fifty more will readily occur to the Casuist. He commands a regiment of them, and he "will march through Coventry, that's flat," though sometimes in the sequel he is sent thither instead.

And to glance at institutions. What a Casuist is the Stock Exchange with its pretended causes for falls and rises. "A deceased's estate is hanging over the market"—we should like to see it hanging. Holidays, broken wires, political uncertainties, anything, as a rule, but the unwelcome fact that well-informed sellers are busy as usual. Or a rise is due to amalgamation-rumours, operators in options, the coming budget and what-not—anything but the main cause which is simply that the concern in question is doing very well.

The House of Commons, again, wields a casuistry worthy of those mediæval Schoolmen who would wrangle about how many angels could cluster around the point of a pin. Those formulas, those answers in the negative, those silences on the alleged ground that an explanation would be against the public interest! And then they tell us that the position is very difficult or delicate, when our enemies are welcomed in our midst, or Englishmen are outraged in China unavenged. Do you think that Palmerston would ever have so

paltered? He would have acted promptly. Difficulties! A statesman is there to overcome them. Delicate! Really, one would imagine that Great Britain was in a decline, so delicate seems to be her constitution. Our chief complaint is not so much of these casuistries as of their mournful monotony. Cannot some new pretexts be found for interest, incompetence, irresponsibility, or puzzle-headed bewilderment? Are such blank-cartridged blunderbusses the sole resource of blunderbores? Is Necessity never to be the mother of something like Invention? Is the Casuistry of a Cabinet never to be a fine art?

But the clumsiest of all Casuists is one who, when it comes to a matter of money, will desert his best friend for that friend's own good. When the Casuist dons the cassock and preaches, his game is up, and who will contribute to the collection after the sermon? Nor is this the sole case of Casuistry's resemblance to Hypocrisy in a cassock. For the Casuist is never in the wrong. By hook or by crook, consciously or unconsciously, he or she can always justify themselves, however tightly they are hemmed in by contradictions. So if the Casuist speaks, as at his best he does, with the tongue of men and angels, he is nothing worth, a tinkling brass and a sounding cymbal. For a span he can make the wrong appear the better reason, but it is for a span only. Detective Time is after the clipped coin which is the alms that false Reason bestows on ragged Respectability.

XIII.—THE HYPOCHONDRIAC

How sad are the chances that sour the milk of human kindness and can turn existence into a persistent attack of jaundice. The Hypochondriac should never be laughed at. Pity is far more his due than the Miser's, for the Miser's plight is generally one of perverted bliss; he does not deserve his imputed name. As a rule he is not miserable. In secret he gloats over the hoard which could buy his neighbour up though he hobbles in tatters. Not so the Hypochondriac who lives in the outer darkness where there is gnashing of teeth.

But this last allusion reminds us of an odd example over which for a moment it may be lawful to linger with half a smile. It happened at a sea-side lodging, a lodging unlike most of its compeers in that it was supremely comfortable. If you were ill the face of its jocund landlady would surely cure you. But up above the sitting-room could be heard, at night especially, the heavy disturbing tread of uneasy feet. This was the only drawback of the place, and our landlady soon revealed its cause. " There was a gentleman upstairs," she said, " who was very lemoncholy—very down-in-the-mouth with some break of the nerves. He would often pace up and down for hours, and then sit for hours more. The worst of it was that he had just got a set of new teeth and he flatly refused to wear them. He was an overworked bank-manager, and somethink had gone wrong with his investments and things. When he was on his chair he would gaze at the new tooth-plate which he had placed on a piece of blotting-paper before him, and behind it lay a list of them old investments. I give you my word, sir, that the pore feller groans and sighs, while he does nothink else in pertickler for days at a time. Otherwise he is a very quiet gentleman, very, and that perlite that it breaks your heart to see him. He eats and drinks very little, and is most grateful for any little service that I may do him. He's a widower, sir, and I do

believe that if he married again—some nice new lady as liked his late wife—it would cure him in no time. It would be a change. Change and company, that's what he wants. I don't hold with being alone—it makes yer mope, and when things go bad-like and them dentists 'as been at yer, there ain't no spirit left in yer, just like the Queen of Sheber."

Such was the landlady's psycho-analysis, probably a correct one. But the picture of a weak, sorrowful, silent man surveying his unused new teeth spread out on a piece of blotting-paper and sadly counting-up his old list of used-up investments would, I thought, have made a splendid subject for Hogarth's elaboration. How many martyrs to circumstances are imaged by this grotesque? A set of unwearable new teeth on a sheet of blotting-paper, a thumbed list of waning investments are far truer emblems of hearts forced to feed on themselves in gnawing solitude than any conventional skeleton in the cupboard. And if after skimming this piteous little recital you exclaim, with Betsy Prig, "I don't believe there's no sich a person," I assert with confidence that there *is*, in this very year of grace, and that his too-false teeth, his despondent list, and his blotting-paper soiled by calculations, are a warning for us all.

As Spenser sings:

> "The woeful man low sitting on the ground,
> Musing full sadly in his sullen mind!"

XIV.—THE TRITON AMONG MINNOWS

He, she, the local Tritons—we all know them, and the Tritoness shall speak first. Miss Hasbin is highly respected in her parish-niche. She has known everybody in her time—or, to be quite accurate, the second-cousin twice removed or the step-brother's uncle of everybody. She loves to remind her neighbours of these worthies. "Tennyson?—no, I cannot say that I actually knew Tennyson, though, of course, I adore his poetry, but one of his grand-nieces was a very great friend of mine and we used often to speak of him. She told me that once when she was staying with him, and ever so many celebrities including Irving were visitors, they would flock outside his bath-room door in the early morning to hear him recite pieces out of his 'Maud,' which was wonderful: you might have heard a pin drop. Browning, do you say? No, I did not actually know Browning, but I saw him once in an Italian railway carriage—*such* a beautiful face. My father was intimate with Mrs. Browning's godfather and had much to tell him of their romantic love-affair and of how she found out that he was really a great poet. It was that astonishing ailing Mrs. Browning, you see, who first discovered what an immense poet he was. Lord Roberts? Yes. I have met Lord Roberts, when he was lecturing on how wickedly unprepared we were for the War which he alone foresaw. He used to wear a long black frock-coat, and I can never forget his voice, which was like a trumpet-call to duty. Who could go to sleep when Lord Roberts spoke? His funeral was too impressive for words. I saw that. Disraeli, did you say? Ah! there was a man if you like: his eyes looked through and through you. I was quite a tot when my father lifted me up on his shoulders to see him as he drove through our village to address a great meeting, on Primrose Day it must have been, for this, you know, was his favourite flower. 'That,' said my father, 'is the great

Lord Beaconsfield.' It meant nothing to me then, but oh, how much it means to me now! He was dressed, I remember, in a brown overcoat. And we once had a cook who had been the still-room maid at Hughenden and told us *so* much about him, of his considerate kindness—a sovereign every Yuletide (that was his word)—of his brilliant conversation, of his huge industry, for he rose at five every morning.

"Did you mention Lord Lytton, the novelist? Ah! I am old enough to recollect him at Torquay. We were staying in the same hotel. I was quite a little girl, and he smiled at me as my nurse and I were going out. *Such* a smile, full of meaning and imagination. It stays with me still. Those were his Last Days of Pompeii, you know.

"Ellen Terry? Yes, her I know well. She once shook my hand in mistake for the hand of someone else, and I shall never forget her smile. Martin Tupper? Well, I am too young to remember him in the flesh, but his third cousin by marriage was a very dear friend of mine and told me that he first came to think of his Proverbial Philosophy when he was reading the Book of Proverbs one Sunday afternoon. He was a staunch churchman was Martin Tupper, and it is elevating to remember, is it not, how many great authors our Bible has influenced. The dear old Bishop of Blankborough do you say? I have often heard him preach those sermons of the old school that told you always to take the first turning to the right, and go straight on. How bracing he was, how wholesome! It is a curious story, how I just missed an acquaintanceship which might have ripened into friendship. I happened to be staying with his great-nephew by marriage who was much concerned about the state of his health, and he drove me ten miles to inquire how he was, and we left cards, for he was then too weak to see us. The next day he died. But for this accident you may be sure that I should certainly have known him. How I reverenced that great man's muscular Christianity! Did you ever read his book 'Go, Thou, and Do Likewise'? Oh, do read it, if only as a tonic for our flabby times." Can you wonder, after this and much more like it, that Miss Hasbin is venerated by the younger generation as they hang on her words around her enormous armchair.

Mr. Pompton-Gatwick is the male Triton among minnows. He is generally supposed to be not only a very wise and good man, an authority on almost everything, but also a great man of the world. He is rich, kindly, and sympathetic, particularly

with young ladies. But he craves an audience which he deserves and gets. He is "full of wise saws and modern instances," and has something of Miss Hasbin's foible for substituting the thorns for the rose in the range of the more modern celebrities that are often on the tip of his tongue. Moreover, he airs a smattering of philosophy and science, and will refer every event to the wisdom of John Stuart Mill. Also he has the Tritonic knack of mistaking commonplaces for revelations. "I have often thought," you will hear him say, "that the great desideratum in life is happiness. We can make others happy, but can we make ourselves so? I do not mean happy-go-lucky, but happy. What *is* happiness? And then he will emulate Mr. Chadband's disquisition on "What is Terewth?" ending by "The philosopher Descartes observes that he could well imagine a monad in space." There, however, he loses himself and good-naturedly descends to the earth again. The earth contains several peers who occasionally call upon him about local affairs, and these become his "monads" as he recounts the incidents of their tedious visits. His jests are prodigious. He is wholly devoid of humour, though good humour he luckily owns in plenty. Indeed, he is not unlike Polonius, whom I always fancy that Shakespeare drew from Bacon in private life. Despite his liking for high horses, he is so benevolent that he becomes lovable.

But Mr. Pompton-Gatwick has another weakness unshared by the importance of Miss Hasbin. He thirsts for ancestry. The great Gatwicks, he is bent on imagining, are of the same stock as himself. He has adopted their coat-of-arms, and he will even rent big places so as to be near their family seat. While they are away abroad he will make friends with the old housekeeper, survey the portraits, discovering likenesses to himself, and glean intimate details of their domestic doings. He will imagine himself into their circle till he half believes that he is one of them. "Is Miss Edith," he will ask, "still so fond of painting flowers? Is Mr. Endymion as good a sportsman as his dear father was? and where is Mr. Trefusis?" Like Adam, he calls all the animals by their names, and it is a happiness to watch *his* happiness in so doing.

Mill and Descartes are forgotten while our Triton swims in his element and is the beneficiary of his illusions. Are we not all so? Do the rocky geological strata of life make anyone happy? and is it not after all the gentle tricks

of sunshine and shadow that lend those rocks their colour and glamour ? If Mr. Pompton-Gatwick is unaware that of old the retainers of great families sometimes took their masters' names and still have descendants, what does it matter ? We should not sneer at our amiable Triton for such pleasant self-deceptions. It is better to be a kindly giant among dwarfs than to regard oneself as a hump-backed dwarf among contemptuous giants. He is very human and very humane, is Mr. Pompton-Gatwick. And if any of us minnows can find another big fish who helps them so often, rescues them from greedy gudgeons, and safeguards them from the octopus, it is not unlikely that our Triton's occupation would be gone. But no minnow will ever find Mr. Pompton-Gatwick's equal, and this true distinction entitles him to disport himself after his own manner. If there is a touch of patronage as he blows his " wreathéd horn " to the smaller fry around him, what of that ? Who would not be proud of his patron-saint ?

XV.—" A-COACHING-WE-WILL-GO "

He stands at the corner of a square, the blithest of all odd errand-mongers. We nickname him " A-coaching-we-will-go," because, in the infinite interchange of costumes which is his speciality, a square, short-cut overcoat with two rows of big pearl buttons, a sporting bowler, a spreading, would-be white stock on which shines a tarnished brass horse-shoe pin, predominate. Each suit that he alternately wears is threadbare and greasy, but he wears each so jauntily and with such a run-to-seed liveliness that it appears to be smart. Each of his quick-change garments expresses a passing mood. On the days when he sports the garb aforesaid, clearly a-coaching he will go, and we with him—therein lies his influence. On those when he is clothed in an ultra-lounging combination of a tattered sports-jacket, a once-knitted waistcoat, and creased dissolute trousers—all of colours unknown to artists—indolence claims him for her own. Even after the War he would sometimes be seen in a mixed-martial uniform, the queerest assortment of the dingiest khaki. And in the late autumn and winter months he chimes with the season, being clad in moulting trousers and what was once a very long " Raglan " which hides everything else, drooping down him like a dank Virginian creeper shorn of its leaves. He is less blithe in this suit than in any other ; wind and rain do not agree with him, though even then he often cracks his jokes and mouths his compliments to the servant-girls, or dances the newest steps before the delighted children from the nearest alley.

Directly the spurious spring returns he wears a faded flower in his faded button-hole. Age cannot wither nor Time stale his infinite variety. Peals of laughter greet his mimicries and sallies. He blows kisses to the ladies, and burlesques the passers-by, only to skip off at speed and hail a taxi, while he

exchanges new jests with its driver. Or he unloads the luggage from a cab, or, expectant, opens one for a casual arrival, or pretends to sweep the dust off a doorstep with a little brush which he carries about with him, or asks if he may carry a parcel, or invents a job if none is visible to the naked eye, as he sits on a tilted box, affecting to clean his shoes.

Whence does he get his wardrobe, and whose discarded apparel is his? Whence come those moist cigarettes that he is always smoking? How does he contrive to live and to drink? —for I regret to say that he is no stranger to mild intoxication. What mean those intermittent and mysterious absences, sometimes for over a fortnight, which perplex his admirers? Mercury, the vagrant's god, alone knows. Certainly he was exempted from service during the War, and I can guess the reasons. If you regard his poor, sodden, draggled little face when there is no spectator near to stimulate his gambols, you behold the ruin of a clever little ne'er-do-weel. Indeed, rumour has it that he started in a superior position. Yet his invincible spirits (it were best not to use the word in its other meaning), his evident good-nature and the antics of his caprices, which charm the children, endear him to the neighbourhood. It is not always propriety or industry that attracts, and there is a streak of fallen humanity about the rakish fellow that half-redeems his lapses—a pale shaft of summer reflected in a ditch.

I have seen him consulted by his audience on most points of punctilio in their tiny world, and the mock-gravity of his advice sent them away satisfied. He has a real fondness for children's games, his flirtations are pure comedy; I should not think that for all his faults he was the foe of any. How Sterne would have sentimentalized him! "Go, poor harmless vagabond," he would have sighed, "go thy wayward ways in peace, but while an honest heart beats in my bosom and I have a penny to spare, I will share it with thee." Unfortunately Sterne seldom had a penny to spare, and I am not so certain about the heart either.

But at any rate this loafer is preferable to those sturdy beggars who force their way and their impostures into our houses, even pretending that they once commanded a battalion, or those depositors of horrible artificial flowers who promise to return, or the threatening mendicants with samples of unwanted wares who try to terrify ladies into purchase. Still

more is he an angel in comparison with those well-liking brayers of musical instruments who brandish their boxes in the streets and in your face under the mask of unemployment : or those husky, uninvited vocalists who "hail with horrid melody the moon." At least he is Comus.

XVI.—THE DENTIST

The Dentist has become a potentate in the land. Ever since the doctors have decreed that most diseases are derived from the mouth the Dentist rules us. He can extract all your teeth in one fell operation and you may not murmur. To keep such teeth would be madness. To be deprived of them is a blessing. Your own opinion counts for nothing. Away go the teeth, and your hallucinations render you the worse for their loss. He will make you a new set. It weighs like lead in your mouth. It is all your fault, your mouth's fault, I mean. You are extremely difficult to fit, your palate is abnormal. This you never realized while your own teeth remained intact. Some months pass in perpetual visits and cheerfully conversational "adjustments." The set is now perfect, above fear or reproach. As a matter of fact it is—to you, of course, not to the dentist—a nightmare: the burden of it is intolerable. You are just starting for a well-earned holiday abroad. You bring the damned thing back to him after being tempted to throw it out of the window. It is silly of you, but you do. He affects to humour your perverseness and re-adjusts the concern. It is now ideal; if the archangel Gabriel were to bring you a set, it could not eclipse this.

You start on your journey with confidence. The New-Jerusalem plate, this time, inflicts two gashes on your tongue, and all meals become agony. When you speak, it wobbles; when you eat, it tortures. You don't eat. You consult a foreign doctor and a foreign dentist at some expense. Just as Lord Castlewood in Thackeray's "Virginians" observed of his mother's servant-girls, "Never see such maids," so of this heavenly plate these experts observe that they never saw such a plate. It is not heavenly, but diabolical. Your martyrdom, they rightly assert, is due not to your alleged mouth but to the re-adjusted plate. "You have now"—as Ollendorf would

have said in his classical French exercise-book—" been to the house of the good dentist." He tells you that there is nothing left for you but to gum it in thrice a day with some sticky powder on some cotton-wool. You do so, and at last your tongue is not daily crucified, but long wisps of cotton-wool protrude from your mouth on otherwise enjoyable excursions.

At length, after a martyrdom which has marred your holiday, you return home. Indignantly once more you repair to your fashionable dentist—your tooth-inquisitor for twenty long years. It is all the fault of your mouth, he repeats. You have an impossible palate, one past praying (though not paying) for. No one on earth can fit it. There is no possible redress. In desperation at once you repair to an unfashionable dentist, who laughs at the impossibility of your mouth and fits you perfectly. You live happily ever afterwards.

No doubt this is an exceptional case, but it is true. Following the advice of M. Coué, I repeat every morning, " I have not an impossible mouth—I have not an impossible mouth, but I used to have an impossible dentist." Now, as dentists are omnipotent and infallible, there must be some kink in my reasoning. I wonder if there is. Is it necessary for anyone so unique as my dental self to buy false gums and a false palate ? When is a mouth not a mouth ? When is a tooth not a tooth but a piercing prong ? These problems distress me. They raise the whole question, so dear to modern minds—" What is Reality ? "

Have you ever voyaged with a dentist in quest of false teeth as well as of false arguments ? A friend of mine once did on a big liner, and he was told by the researcher that he was off to Madeira and the Canary Islands to dig up the skulls of some aboriginal tribe with a name resembling that of a Welsh village. This was years ago, and I suppose and hope that I am now wearing manufactured teeth and not the primeval teeth of cannibals in the year Two. A recourse to dentists almost from birth is now prescribed for so many that surely the stock of cave-dwellers' teeth must be exhausted. I devoutly trust so.

And then those waiting-rooms, however artistically decorated, with their last month's " Punches," their shameless clocks that tick out doomsday, their sentenced inmates awaiting that grim butler's ingratiating summons to the tumbril, their prints of eighteenth-century milkmaids displaying their own matchless teeth to admiring cows, their veiled

consciousness of insecure suspense! All waiting-rooms are haunted, but is any waiting-room so spookful as the dentist's? The ghosts of teeth waver in the darkness.

I recognize that we ought to be grateful for dental progress. Our teeth are no longer pulled out by a string attached to a door, there are gas and anodynes, and an expert hand to civilize the guillotine. And to retrace our steps as far back as Elizabethan or old Roman periods, we are no longer racked by sets of false teeth, the size of piano keys, that descended—like sins—from generation to generation. I take off my hat also to my St. George of a dentist, my rescuer from the bondage of fashion. But I tremble to dream of the future. I have one real tooth left—the hermit of my mouth. Will Hygiene rob me of that before the Reign of Terror under dental Jacobins is done? Shall I be told that if I had paid monthly visits to the adroit executioner, my hermit might have survived? Shall I—perish the thought!—ever again be assured that it is all the fault of my mouth? I hear you laugh and say, "*My* dentist never hurts me." I dare say not, but do his teeth? Have they ever proved what the Scotch farm-wife said of her late husband to a condoler on his death, "Just an expense"? If you laugh at me, please take care to do so on the right side of your mouth.

XVII.—MRS. TOOTH-CALAMY

(*An Accidentist*)

THESE dooms of dentistry remind me of Mrs. Tooth-Calamy, who spends much of her time in dental company. She is a most pleasant and praiseworthy woman, but she has two curious characteristics. She loves double-names—most of her friends own them—so she regrets that so few dentists are thus distinguished. And she adores accidents. All her friends continually have accidents which she glorifies in conversation. She outdoes any hospital. "My dear," she will say, "you know my great friend Lady Luck-Lux. Just think what happened to her yesterday. She was crossing the widest part of the Cromwell Road—you remember how wide it is—and had just stopped for a moment to avoid a big motor which she saw approaching, when a horrid little two-seater darted out from nowhere and knocked her over. Luckily a nice car with nice people drew up and took her home in a state of collapse. Three of her teeth were knocked out, her face was mauled, that beautiful new hat of hers—the one with a partridge in cornflowers on it—was pulped to smithereens. At first they thought that it was concussion of the brain. Mercifully it was not so, but she was bruised all over, poor dear thing, and it will be months before she will be able to play bridge again."

Or, "I have something dreadful to tell you. Poor dear General Don-Donkin—you must have met him at my house—slipped yesterday on a piece of orange peel and fell heavily on to the pavement. With his usual pluck he rose unaided, and, thanking the bystanders, said he would walk, but the pain was such that he had after all to be driven home—a broken ankle. It will take him weeks to recover, and oddly enough he was dining with us that night. You can imagine

how shocked we were when his valet telephoned. I don't think I shall ever be able to eat marmalade again."

One last illustration. "Oh, my dear, I had the shock of my life yesterday. I expect that you know the Milk-Flossingtons. No?—I thought you did." In parenthesis, one is always expected to know all Mrs. Calamy's acquaintance who are foisted on one as if they had been nursery-playmates. "She is one of my oldest friends; such a pretty little woman, and never would shingle—one of the nice old-fashioned sort, I am glad to say. And he is among the most charming men alive, a banker, you know, the best company in the world, and really his good stories make you scream. Well, they were returning from the theatre as usual last Friday night when what should they see at their door but two fire-engines, showers of appalling sparks hissing up from the chimneys, and a great crowd—doing nothing as usual. All the chimneys were on fire. He and the chauffeur at once helped the firemen, while his wife went into hysterics, for her pet parrot was always carried up into one of the attics at night. Providentially, dear little Dora was staying with her aunt in the country. All the servants were shrieking at the top of their voices in their nightgowns, and two had lung-congestion afterwards. Lily Milk-Flossington, who was wearing a very thin frock—that lovely green gauze and chiffon one—would insist, when she came to, on holding the fire-escapes, and one nearly fell on her. She caught the most dreadful chill and is still laid up. Luckily the fire was extinguished. She said that her brave husband looked like a chimney-sweep afterwards. The water damaged so many of their pretty things. But all's well that ends well, I suppose, though it never rains but it pours, and little Dora caught the measles that evening. The parrot died of shock. Still, it might have been worse." You always feel cheered up after a chat with Mrs. Tooth-Calamy.

XVIII.—THE CROSS-WORDER

For some years everyone past their first youth was guessing acrostics. It was a profession, it is so still, but it has been partially eclipsed by the Cross-word. All the world is at it, especially the middle-aged. In clubs and places where they sleep, small knots of elderly men seem to do nothing else. They congregate in groups. They rake in classical dictionaries, encyclopædias and the like from morning till night. They compare notes and note comparisons. They think much more of these mental gymnastics than of their families or bank-balance. I watch grey-beards discussing whether one of the lights is a Greek hero or a mediæval war. The arguments pro and con seem a matter of life and death. The Test-match is nothing in gravity of issue to the contests of the Cross-word. As a rule, these discussions are amicable, but sometimes the disputants wrangle, and then the punster interposes, that incorrigible Victorian, and ejaculates: "Hush, not a cross word!" These Cross-word conflicts then develop into crusades.

The impartial psychologist longs to learn what the inwardness of this new sophistry is. In the first place, it would seem that it is a sort of indoor golf affording exercise to the jaded wits as the foursome does to the jaded body. In the second place, its new atmosphere is created by the newspapers as a means towards increased circulation. In the third, each player at the game supposes that it educates him or her: the ascertainment of countless names usurps the throne of knowledge; it is a sort of cramming, and I doubt not that, if it does not soon yield to some other craze of a kindred nature, there will be paid crammers for the Cross-word as there already are for Bridge.

In the fourth place, it appeals to that endless leisure peculiar to many forms of unemployment. Was there ever an age of such leisure as ours? Only one, I fancy, and that was during

the reign of the Emperor Hadrian. We are not told whether some form of the Cross-word was then discovered and pursued, but we know that towards his latter end Hadrian sought to surpass the Greek professors and rhetoricians, and that the Latin Favorinus, when taxed with subservience to the versatile dictator, replied that it was unwise to dispute with the master of thirty legions. Are these thirty legions to be accepted literally ? May they not have been a metaphorical description of Hadrian's mastery of some peaceful game very like the modern Cross-word—a game diplomatically invented to pacify the Empire ? I admit that this explanation may by some be deemed far-fetched, but it certainly is not more far-fetched than the late Mr. Gladstone's derivation of Homer from Genesis, Mrs. Pott's identification of Shakespeare with Bacon, Samuel Butler's theory of the Odyssey's feminine origin, or Mr. Bernard Shaw's assumption that Joan of Arc spoke cockney-slang. At any rate, nothing is impossible in Cross-words, the creators of which have taken all knowledge for their province.

One thing surprises me. On the whole wives and daughters, rural spinsters and some ladies on omnibuses or marine parades excepted, are not enthusiasts for Cross-words. One might have supposed that Eve's curiosity would have been transmitted to scholarship at play. Not a bit of it. So let me venture on a suggestion in the best interests of the Press. Let a form of Cross-word be devised wholly devoted to the millinery and coiffure of all ages. Then, I believe, the Tree of Knowledge would bear fresh and refreshing fruit. The circulation of our enterprising journals would be trebled. It needs no complicated calculation to prove this. There are ever so many more women in the world than men. Most of them worship at the shrine—wherever it may be—of the draped Venus. They would spend years in unriddling the shifting mysteries of costume. And at length the Cross-word would belong to the feminine gender.

But what would become of our elderly men in the clubs ? Their plight would be pitiful. Unskilled in the developments of feminine adornment from the stayless Egyptian to our top-booted land-girl, they would either find their occupation ended, or they would become dependents, and resented dependents, on womankind. In such delicate crises it is well to pause and consider. Do we elderly men prefer our prerogative of torpor ? I cannot conceive it. The blood of the Vikings would still render the masculine Cross-word supreme.

XIX.—JACK-OF-ALL-TRADES

He has been brought up to believe that not a second in a long day should pass unoccupied, and he has great powers of concentration. By consequence his training compels him to be a Jack-of-all-trades. He cannot sit still, he cannot read except for a set purpose. If he is not working hard, he is playing hard; indeed, he is working hard and working others hard when he is hunting or poloing or even lawn-tennising. Play is scarcely the word for his indoor recreation, which is merely a means towards working again in the open air. He has a real talent for mechanics. He mends (and sometimes ends) everything in his carpenter's shop. But he is not content with this. He loves music after his own manner, and so he sings after his own manner or theory—his voice is excellent—and, after his own manner, he plays the violin. He has a business and minds it; he goes off exploring far continents for months, bringing back big game which he stuffs himself. Yet he is never worn out, and never diffuse. Rather he is profuse.

Now—he confesses it himself—if he had ever fixed all his immense energies on a single thing, what a master of that *métier* he would have proved. He might even have conquered the world. And yet it is perhaps well that he never set his heart on a single object. Hard against himself he has always been, but if he had become a sort of Napoleon, he might have proved passing hard on others.

He is living in an age of multiplied interests. It is impossible to keep up with all of them. Had he flourished in the Elizabethan heyday, when several interests were compatible with success in each, what a wonder would he have been! It is the terrible increase of population which fights against ubiquitous capacity. The younger Pliny advised his friend Cornelius Rufus to leave the care of his husbandry to his inferior servants and addict himself to the study of letters. Even then one could not

do everything, some division of labour has always been the secret of success, and the judgment that assures it is efficiency's master-key. "Let every man have his own way, and we shall have peace," is an observation in one of Montaigne's essays. The sleepless Jack-of-all-trades cannot let every man have his own way, and therefore there is little peace. He assumes such manifold avocations that many another's shoulders are needs put out of joint. What says Milton's archangel?—

> ". . . Only add
> Deeds to thy knowledge answerable; add faith,
> Add virtue, patience, temperance; add love,
> By name to some called Charity, the soul
> Of all the rest: then wilt thou not be loth
> To leave this Paradise, but shalt possess
> A paradise within thee, happier far."

It is difficult for the Jack-of-all-trades to accomplish this long addition-sum. Yet, let it be owned with honour, how far better he is, how much more stimulating than the cheapjacks of no trade who nowadays are fatally in evidence.

XX.—JANE-IN-THE-BOX

JANE is a young widow, and a London flat is her box. It is a very attractive box, furnished, like its owner, with much taste. It looks reposeful and harmonious, but here Jane disagrees with it. Through an epidemic of our period, Jane can never stay there for long. She bounces out of it on the slightest opportunity. In winter, she is off to Switzerland for the sports, to the Riviera for the sun, to Egypt for more sun and smarter society. In summer—after the mythical season—she is off again, to Deauville or Trouville, or any other ville where excitements incite. In the autumn she is off once more to the Italian Lakes or what-not. A well-to-do nomad is Jane-in-the-box. But though, as it so happens, Jane's wanderings repeat themselves with something like regularity, that is only because Jane's impulses do the same. She has no fixed rules save those appertaining to restiveness—no recurrent instinct like the swallow's. This is proved by her spasmodic appeals to her friends at the last moment for companionship on her travels. As a rule, she is too late. They all with one accord begin to make excuse. Jane has to fare alone.

Jane's flat is in the most alluring segment of Chelsea. She professes to dote on it. It is so old-world, such an oasis in the hurly-burly, so picturesque (like her hats), so historical—a mouth-filling phrase for one who has never read history. She dotes on it, or rather she dotes on when and how to get out of it. Sometimes she lets it and regrets the let. Jane's whole career consists in doting on things, and then getting out of them. The fact is that ever since she has been a widow this restless habit has grown upon Jane. While her husband was alive she never flitted from spot to spot, she was quite happy in her own surroundings. But, to tell the truth, it was not she but her husband who made that environment. When her husband was no more, her home-life ended. She spent much more on

finery and amusement, and needed many more places wherein to display the one and procure the other. Moreover, deep down in her being lurked, half-known to herself, the butterfly-chase after a new husband. Jane is quite honest. She will not take any man, but someone she must find. Hence, to a large degree, her Switzerland, Italy, Riviera, Egypt, and Quelque-choseville. Her friends pray that this husband may be found. Her present precipitate appeals for their company on luxurious rounds are most disconcerting. They upset her best allies, sometimes revolt or even lose them. They would give much to lock the lid of her box.

As a censor, which I have neither the right nor pretension to be, I should like to tell Jane that she is injuring her country. Men make Great Britain, but women make England. If they wish to make England, they should make a home. Their perpetual and eccentric absences are fatal as well as frivolous. If only they were superficially sentimental in their man-hunts, if, like Sterne's widow in M. Dessein's remise, they could clasp hands and have done with it, there might be some hope for us all. But they are unsentimental. They are in practical search of an amenable husband.

One of my friends once told me long ago that he was in a small wooden Swiss hotel on a green hill where he was allotted a little bedroom whose " thin partitions do their walls divide." Next to him was a newly-married couple who kept him awake when he was very tired by constant tiffs and reconciliations. At last he could not help overhearing the bride say, " Kiss me, dear, and make it up." But then it all began again. My friend at last could stand these perturbing sallies no longer, so he called to them through the wall, " For Heaven's sake, sir, kiss her and have done with it ! Don't, please, keep me awake all night."

And thus we may be pardoned for imploring Jane-in-the-box to discover her second husband and to cease travelling after him. Is England's vigil to be eternal because these Janes-in-the-box roam from flower to flower and are unable to settle down, or, oftener than not, even to settle up ?

XXI.—JUGGERNAUT'S CAR

Mr. Juggernaut owns a first-rate car. He is most undemonstrative is Mr. Juggernaut, but if there is one thing more than another in which his heart is concerned it is that machine. He is a silent masterly man. He will not permit any one of his family to use that car unless he himself drives it. The car is the symbol of his kind authority. Mrs. Juggernaut worships her husband as the best, the wisest, the strongest of men whose decrees, however harsh they may sometimes seem, are always for her especial good; "beneath a frowning providence he hides a smiling face." She is a dear, tender, clinging, refined creature, a gentle Victorian. For years Mr. Juggernaut has "ragged" her, well-knowing that his old jokes about her delicate health or the escapades of his occasional absences are still seriously accepted. If anyone else made them he would be wrathful. But from him they are all beneficent. She affectionately agrees. She may never use the car at her own sweet will, but he will treat her to it at his sovereign pleasure.

She professes an unmeasured delight in these long, furious, and solitary drives. She is one of those who out of habitual duty and fanciful sweetness of nature can transform a cabbage-patch into a garden, a dreary waste into paradise, or a quickset hedge into a bed of roses. So she adores the caramboles of the car for long distances with little conversation. It is enough that she enjoys the scenery and the society of her husband. She has not been feeling very well lately, and the peace and quiet will do her good. For at least six hours on end Mr. Juggernaut's car will race over the worst roads, if possible, making sudden leaps and bounds that remind one of the Grand National. At one moment it nearly takes a fence. His wife represses a stifled little scream as she is well-nigh tossed up in the air when the car jumps over the moon.

They pass a village alehouse after five hours without a

meal. Would she care to eat something? No, it is such a joy to admire the lovely country, it would be a pity to stop, and she has eaten the little packets of chocolate with which he considerately provided her. Quite right. He only asked, but he knew that she would not care for those beastly pothouses. So on they whirl homewards, bumping over some devious by-ways piled with heaps of stones, since the views obtainable from these paths of penance are so much more beautiful than those from the tame, hedged-in, high road. I do not say that this is his fun, or that he deliberately chooses the martyr's pilgrimage to a crown of glory. It is only that he prefers such obstacles at all costs. He by no means realizes that Mrs. Juggernaut has her heart in her mouth all the time, or that she is being metaphorically crushed by his car as it lurches from side to side like a vessel in a storm. She is perfectly happy, he is sure, and he takes pleasure in the thought. And so at last in the gloaming comes the blissful end of a lovely day. The car lies at anchorage, and Mrs. Juggernaut has not enjoyed anything so much for months.

Now, the odd part of Mr. Juggernaut's temperament is that though you would think him the most matter-of-fact man alive and perhaps impute any little streak of selfishness in such expeditions to a lack of perception, he is at root one of the most sentimental men possible, with highly-strung nerves beneath his coat of iron. The least thing that touches his heart upsets him invisibly because of his signal self-control. His form of self-indulgence would for weaker or softer men mean a rigid asceticism. This the heroic wife recognizes to the full, but her own fortitude goes unnoticed. If she had ever, against her own grain, stood roundly up to him, no one would have been better pleased than he, for underneath his firm exterior he loves her fondly. Men live on contraries, and there are gods whom prostration irritates.

Full of such reflections, one night behold I dreamed an impossible dream. I dreamed that dear Mrs. Juggernaut had saved up for a surprise. That she had actually bought a car of her own and had it garaged elsewhere till she had learned how to drive it. Then, one fine morning, I saw her come down beaming to breakfast and say to her husband, " My dear, I have something to tell you. I know that all along you have secretly wished that I could manage a car myself. Well, I *have* learned to drive a car myself, and, what is more, by spending so little on

myself, I have been able to *buy* a car. I knew how pleased you would be. If you have nothing better to do I beg you as a favour to let me drive you to Diddleton and back—the same exquisite line of country along which you took me nine months ago. I shall choose exactly the same route, for I know that all that you choose must be right. And in case you should be hungry —which I never am, you know—here is the little packet of Peter's chocolate which you always so thoughtfully present to me. See, there stands the car. What do you think of it? Isn't it a beauty? If I make any mistake you will be there to correct me. Now *do* say that you will come: it will be such a pleasure. And I *do* hope that those Swillingham roads are still in such bad condition, and that not a stone-heap has been removed from the Larkingham lanes. I want to *practise*, you see." And then in my dream I exclaimed, "Heaven speed them on this experiment," for I am much attached to both of them, and I am sure that he would appreciate so refined a recompense. But I awoke, and lo! it was all a dream in the watches of the night, and when I told them of it at breakfast, they laughed me goodnaturedly to scorn.

XXII.—IDENTITIES

How frequently I meet the personalities of the past in the streets, omnibuses, or tubes—especially the latter which are an electric-lighted Aladdin's palace for identities or reincarnations, whichever you prefer to call them. It is a crowded compartment. I have risen several times to swing on straps for the comfort of ladies who insist on entering a smoking carriage. Hitherto I have made way for old ladies who belong to no particular period. This time it is for Mary Queen of Scots. There is no mistaking her. She has those same velvety, uncanny eyes, the same abundant, dark-brown hair brushed off her shapely brow as was the mode of her time, the same perplexing mouth and the same beckoning, mysterious smile hovering around it, the same waspish figure, the same tapering fingers, the same lying-in-wait attitude. Mary, no doubt of it. She is now a hospital nurse and seems to have been just informed of Darnley's disappearance. She makes her exit hurriedly at the next station.

I reseat myself, and look round. Why, there, surely, is Sheridan. I ought to know something about him, for on this great comedian I have bestowed two volumes. Yes, Sheridan. The same alert face and big, burning eyes. The same rather hanging dewlaps with the suspicion of a cat about to pounce on a mouse ; the same big, eloquent lips. He is sprucely attired. In these days he looks as if he were a pork-butcher. Well, whether you kill reputations or pigs, what does it matter ? He will probably get out at the Caledonian Road (unless this train passes it) and fling someone else's guineas to the driver of his unpaid-for chariot, to each mine-host of the once quiet highway, and half of someone else's guinea to the best-looking maids.

And yonder, whom should I see but Henry the Eighth. Good heavens ! Hal, who made so many women lose their

heads for him, is still evidently a lover of good fare, a liker of good songs, and a ruiner of good men. By St. George of England, it is Henry the Eighth. He appears now to be a prosperous stockbroker: may his shadow never grow less! He could clear up many more secrets than can that staring advertisement yonder of Cardinal Wolsey.

And over there in that unscanned corner—as I live, it is Catherine Parr, who, in these degenerate days, goes out a-charing. I cannot help noticing how doggedly he averts his gaze from her. Being now on the Stock Exchange, surely he should be pleased to see one who is not remote from being over par (here peeps in the Victorian pun), but Hal never could see a joke, though he does not look as if he was haunted by as many of them as of his wives. He is a heartless fellow, is Hal. And next, as I rise again, in steps Cleopatra. No mistake about her. That same Sarah-Bernhardt-like figure, those same almond eyes, that same wiry determination of chin and fitful fascination of the rhymed lips. She is now a well-known actress and fills a smaller stage. Out she goes in her turn. Once more I cease my strap-exercise and sit down, expectant. Who should next enter but the incomparable D'Orsay. He has not changed the style of his own period, so he fixes the public attention. He wears the familiar white stock, the spreading black satin tie with a jewelled pin carelessly, artfully, fastidiously aslant athwart it. His boots are mirrors, his hands are ivory, his hair a picture—life, not still-life! D'Orsay it is undoubtedly. A faint scent of jasmine hovers around him. He is now a famous man-milliner. And who is it that treads so closely and sharply on his heels? Bless my soul if it is not Julius Cæsar, the perfect image of his bust in the British Museum. I feel a trifle cowed at his presence. He notices nobody and seems to overawe the carriage, but, after all, he is only a barrister of Lincoln's Inn with a fair conveyancing practice.

Who is this handsome old fellow, too, in the shabby coat, he with the flowing white beard and locks, the colossal forehead, the piercing eyes that gaze into the future, the lips, at once those of a creator and craftsman? There is no mistaking him. He is none other than Leonardo Da Vinci who is now merely an artist's model, and lodges in an attic of the sweet-shop kept by the Signora Gioconda. She too has come down in this maddening world and has grown quite pinched and acid. No one would be more surprised than she

at her famous portrait in the Louvre— "Mache! Leonardo e un pazzo!"

How many more transmigrated spirits will start out of history before I must quit the magic circle? I am waiting for two presences, and for two alone. The one is Disraeli, the other Lady Hamilton. But "will they come if I do call for them?" Alas! they will not. Here is my station, and as I go out, only fat George the Prince Regent enters, now, it would seem, a thriving commercial traveller. I must be content. One day, perchance, I shall behold Lady Hamilton and Disraeli, but probably not: both are difficult to repeat. For the moment I am modern. "Beware of Pickpockets," "Keep clear of the Gates," "No Smoking." Each of these commandments would thoroughly have met with Count D'Orsay's approval.

XXIII.—THE BANK-CLERK

Among our unacknowledged heroes surely the Bank-Clerk stands prominent. He does more with less pay and greater efficacy than anyone whom I know. Early and late he works hard, beset by fussy inquirers and bothersome idiots of both sexes, yet he is always civil. He advises muddleheads and, like the policeman, guides the feeble over the crossings of life. He handles vast sums of money with honour unimpeccable. He always looks neat, often smart. One is sometimes tempted to wonder why he ever chose a profession where so many combined virtues were needed, where such strenuous industry is veiled from the public view. Each incomer only remembers what the Bank-Clerk does for *him*. He does not reflect for how many hundreds he is doing the same all day, or how much remains for him to get through when the doors are closed, and at last he can smoke.

Have you ever seen the Turkish peasant in Asia Minor when the gun announces that the great fast is over? Immediately he lights his cigarette. So it is with the Bank-Clerk when, on the stroke of half-past three, the great gates are closed. It may take more than an hour before he is free to go home—the bachelor to his diggings, often far afield, the husband to his smiling wife and chubby children. And each, mind you, has a hobby of his own. Many are athletic, some are artistic, some are scholars, most are gardeners, and all are handy. He has energy for much in his after hours. And in all weathers he remains unchanged.

Why, I repeat, does a youth, often excellently educated, choose so wearing a profession? The secret lies, I fancy, in the fact that it offers a sure career combined with a definite

esprit de corps. It is a vocation of hope. Unless something unforeseen happens he knows that he can rise to being the head of a department, and then to being a sub-manager, and then to becoming a full-blown manager of a local branch, and finally to being the manager of a big London Branch with a good pension on retirement. There are few uncertainties and many alleviations in his career.

Then regard the sub-manager in his box of state at the end of the counter. He has not only alleviations but distractions. Dapper, often faultlessly attired and conscious of a willowy figure, he enjoys many a conversation with famous and fascinating ladies. Sometimes, indeed, interesting secrets are confided to him. In old days he was good enough to enlighten me about some of those celebrities who transform the bank into what I believe Harrods' Stores advertise themselves as being—" The Rendezvous of the Élite." He pointed out one middle-aged belle, with many dogs about her wearing jangling collars, as a great friend of the late King Edward, who still receives the best and earliest information about most things. Another, a footlight of the past, whose *beaux yeux* can still enchant the clerks and charm away the incessant ring of the telephone. Another, who interests me more—her air is brisk, she is still comely, everything about her is clear-cut and decisive. " She is a wonderful woman," he whispers, " a born commander of people and things. She began as a cook in a big house, came to own several prosperous hotels, and is the shrewdest investor that I have ever met. Statesmen frequent her hostelries and trust her with back-scenes which she never reveals. She has become a force and an influence."

Much human interest is dramatized on the Bank-Stage. Executors in deep mourning come trooping in. Strange shuffling customers present cheques which are keenly scrutinized. Tin boxes and plate-chests filmed with the dust of ages are hauled up out of the Bank-vaults for the inspection of artless youths and maidens. Young women from the shops hand in piles of cheques and receive bags of coins, from which you perceive that the drapers prosper. Yet the receiver treats the whole affair with perfect nonchalance and retires as if thousands were a bagatelle. Every holiday-maker abroad concocts trips and discusses exchanges on that parterre. And many a much more important matter is solemnly debated within earshot of the placid Bank-Clerk. A book on the

Romance of Banks has yet to be written, and I can only hope that one of my young, all-knowing, all-enduring friends behind that polished mahogany may one day be its licensed author. There are very few Bank-clerks who would not improve the *corps diplomatique*.

XXIV.—SHOPPERS

VERY few of our everyday habits evading notice betray temperament so manifestly as does shopping. To analyse every tone of the shopper's caprices would require a small volume. Only a broad characterization can be here essayed.

Men shop to buy, women shop to handle. That is a broad but true distinction. A man, as a rule, knows what he wants, goes in and gets it. A woman generally knows what she wants, goes in and often does not buy it, or, if she does, only after many comparisons with other wares of the same description. She knows what she wants, but she also knows that she must see and touch everything on the way to it. This is her enjoyment. She shops for pleasure, and I am convinced that Eve lingered long in her choice of fig-leaves. The man shops from necessity. The woman is an artist by virtue of her delight in selection, her infinite capacity for taking (and giving) pains in the pursuit of the ideal. For her, shopping is a romance, and she shops for shopping's sake. The man is a realist. He just *has* to shop, that is all. When the two shop together these contrasts are patent.

Mr. and Mrs. Noman enter Selfrods. He wants some neckties ; it is a bore, but he needs them. He makes straight for what is unpleasantly termed " The Gent's Hosiery and Haberdashery Department." She attends him in that lift with its plaintive wail of " Goin' up." The young Marquis who serves him shows him what he seeks. He is on the point of taking several when Mrs. Noman intervenes. " Don't you think, dear, that you had better see a few more ? I am not certain whether these are pure silk, and this black one will scarcely match your new suit." The Marquis assures her that all the ties are of the richest and rarest silk, but she perseveres in handling them, and in softly shaking her head with a confidential glance at Mr. Noman. Trays on trays are brought

down from their pinnacles by the young Marquis. Mrs. Noman cannot resist discussing and fingering each of their contents or comparing their prices and qualities.

Over twenty minutes elapse during this process to which the unruffled young Marquis is hardened by experience. Mr. Noman wonders at his pretty helpmate's protracted patience. He is beginning to drum a little tune with his feet on the floor—a sure sign of the reverse on his part. "Don't you think, my dear," he murmurs, "that we have been long enough choosing a few ties? After all, they are to be *my* ties, you know, not yours." A reproachful smile wreathes itself round Mrs. Noman's lovely and lively lips. "Oh, Harry," she whispers, "you men are *such* bad shoppers. The more haste, the less speed, you know. Now these four, I think, will do nicely, and are in keeping with your clothes. Men always have a poor eye for colour. It's *your* business, you see, so you mustn't complain. I do hope, dear, that I have helped you ever so little over the ties."

So, by a confusion of metaphors, Mr. Noman finds himself saddled with the ties which he does *not* want, and I may add that later on he returned by stealth and bought the ties which he did want. "Now, Harry," pursues Mrs. Noman, "we have to choose a wedding-present for Poppy Trumpington, haven't we? I thought that a silver-topped scent-bottle would be just the thing—so useless, you know, and she has everything already that anyone could give her. Not more than a guinea, Harry, eh?" Harry follows, dumb before his shearer. So once more into the lift, this time to the dirge of "Goin' down."

Where are the cut-glass scent-bottles? Oh, here they are, piles of them. Mrs. Noman is in her element as they are paraded before her. She touches each separately to make sure that the glass is cut, not moulded. One of them, with a plain silver top, she rather likes; it is not vulgar. The price? What, two guineas! It is far too dear. The young Marchioness assures her that the model is considered to be absurdly cheap, and Mrs. Noman observes that millionaires may so consider it. How about the *plain* glass scent-bottles? Then a military inspection is made of battalions. None will suit. Either it is too expensive or it is in bad taste. There is nothing left for it but to buy a silver photograph-frame, the choice of which occupies fully ten minutes more. Nearly an hour has been consumed over these two operations which refresh Mrs. Noman extremely.

She is now in quest of a new opera-cloak which Harry, poor

man, fancies to be a matter of a few minutes. On the way, Mrs. Noman's eye lights on a newly-invented stove which can be turned into an elegant seat when it is not alight. "The very thing, dear, for our drawing-room landing. How ingenious it is! Let us inquire about it. I promise not to keep you long." The assistant comes forward. Explanations and measurements attend Mrs. Noman's incessant questions. Other stoves, too, are fetched and ranged beside it. And then, after a fresh quarter of an hour and much show of consulting her much-the-worse half, Mrs. Noman decides on thinking it over and letting them know. Harry is such a darling that, of course, he will accompany her to the opera-cloak department; she would not for worlds buy anything he might not like. A few opera-glasses—happy thought!—are reviewed *en route*, and at length they arrive at her destination.

I will not venture to describe the scene of this final battle. She wants the opera-cloak so intensely that she must needs touch every opera-cloak in the shop, including that charming one in the window, which is ever so much more "chic" (or is it "*très snob*"?) than any inside. And hitherto they have bought nothing that they did not absolutely want except the opera-glasses which were ridiculously cheap—her Harry must bear this in mind. How long have they been at Selfrods? What! Close on two hours! "How quickly time passes when one is busy, and it's a lovely opera-cloak, isn't it, Harry?—much prettier than Lady Cashback's and only half the price. Now own up, am I not a good shopper, dear? You know that I am, and I came with you chiefly on *your* account."

Harry mumbles something pleasant, but I can reveal his inmost thoughts. He is saying to himself, "'Get it at Selfrod's,' runs the advertisement—well, I *have* been getting it with a vengeance! She *is* a dear, but hang it, more than two hours over three purchases, and in this atmosphere. It's the limit! *What* an afternoon!" And in thus moralizing he has repeated a phrase which a mutual friend of ours always employs when he is told to admire one of those heavy old Dutch landscapes, the colours of which Time has chemically blackened. "*What* an afternoon!"

XXV.—" LORELEI "

EVERYONE remembers Heine's wonderful folk-song of the Lorelei. If they do not remember the words they must certainly be haunted by the expressive music to which it has been set. On a romantic height by the quiet Rhine in the glow of sunset sits the arch-siren, and sings as she combs her golden locks. Below, the boatman, in his slender skiff, sits entranced and spell-bound. He rises. His eyes are fatally fixed on the singer of a compelling, overpowering strain. At length, under the sway of her sorceries, both the boatman and the boat are whelmed. It is a song of legend and a thrill of allegory. I can give but one minor but significant illustration.

Have you ever encountered Lurline Latimer ? If so it was probably abroad. She divides her year between all the pleasure-resorts of Europe, reserving only May, June and July for London, which is her school rather than her home. She is not in the first flush of youth, but she is extraordinarily fascinating—not perhaps quite a beauty but decidedly an enchantress. She springs from a good old stock that somehow has become detached from its moorings. Wherever she moves, her mother moves with her—a frail, faded Cleopatra. And at first sight it is touching to watch with what tenderness Lurline cherishes this permanent invalid who must be supported on every expedition, and towed home as a wreck might be by a pilot-steamer. Lurline is a strategist. At every centre of her plan of campaign she summons one by one the young men of her choice. Sometimes she constrains their appearance by telegram, sometimes—the familiars—by letter. They respond as if by magic.

Here is Captain Fitzadare. He arrived yesterday after the departure of Sir Philip Pailey, who could stand it no longer. He golfs with her, for her he hires motors, to her he gives constant banquets. He also tends her mother. You will find the

trio on the nearest golf-links. The delicate old mother is gently bestowed in the noonday glare under the shadow of an ancient arbutus, the sentinel of the club-house. They place her on the *chaise-longue*, lovingly enwrap her with shawls and rugs. And then, not having yet played their round of golf, they stray off together up those winding, secluded hill-paths, lost to all the world but themselves. At last, in their—or rather Fitzadare's—car, they gently re-deposit Lurline's mother and return hotelward. The length of each successor's visit depends mainly (not meanly) on the income of the stayer. Sometimes one of them departs half-ruined, for the gambling casinos of each neighbourhood are frequently visited, motherless. But no sooner are the ranks closed, than another and rasher soldier of good fortune takes his place. Nothing wrong happens—nothing but wistful flirtations, hand-pressures, and languishing farewells.

On occasion she will herself treat her philanderers, but this is merely her tact after a long run of luck. It is marvellous to watch how she alternately collects, dispatches, and reunites her despairing swains. She is a far greater diplomatist than most of the ninnies who now mismanage a Europe in leading-strings. Give her a free hand, someone's free purse and her unfreeable slaves—she would reconstruct the post-War world. As it is she works her wonders on a small stage with paltry materials. Her adorers come and go like shadows, and all of them, even the wealthiest, poorer than when they came. And yet they are seldom mutinous. She can soothe and re-charm them even when by some mischance they are assembled together at the wrong moment. Her calculated caresses can exorcise even the ghosts of crisis. And all the time that ailing, wraith-of-beauty mother sheds a silent sanction and influence.

I wonder how often Lurline the philanderess has unstrung or undone her vagrant idolizers, how often her stricken mother, wittingly or unwittingly, has connived. Many an intended prey escapes before the sunset has died down on the Rhine and the tuneful night has confirmed the demi-goddess' empire. For Lorelei's incantations are omnipotent in the cool gloaming :

> " I wis in the whirlpool's clinging
> Sink boatman and skiff distraught.
> And this, with the spells of her singing,
> The Lorelei hath wrought."

What is her pleasure in this quest after fire-flies or sometimes even after moths? I think that it lies in the rapture of pursuit far more than in the disappointments of possession. She is Endymion's moon, Diana the huntress, Lilith the seductive; nay, the sun itself on some summit that chases and parts the rising clouds, packs them together, and sends them shivering below. There is something weird about Lurline, something of the elfin world. I have watched her for hours, but have never fathomed her being. She is always beckoning, absorbing, promising, and reattracting. Was, perchance, her mother like her when she was young? Are they both the birth of some mortal's union with a fairy? Who and what was her father, the reputed descendant of a bishop who died at the stake? Discreet history does not relate. But of this I feel convinced. If Lurline and her mother were to vanish from sight to-morrow this gazing-stock world of ours would seem the poorer, though many a bachelor might prove the richer. I have never seen a woman in more than casual converse with either of them. They roam the continent and return, there is nothing really against them, and yet they live in close communion with nobody but those ardent, dapper, good-looking men who hover around them everywhere like mists, part like mists, and like mists reassemble.

"And this with the spells of her singing,
The Lorelei hath wrought."

PART IV

FANTASIES

I.—HER PORTRAIT

HERBERT FOSS—"old fossil," as he was nicknamed—was a rich and reticent bachelor of sixty with a countenance of parchment. For years he had done much the same thing every day He lived in the Albany, walked thence to the Megatherium Club, read and dozed there from luncheon to dinner of which he partook at home, read again save on the rare occasions when he dined out or went to the theatre, and at eleven retired to rest. Sometimes in summer he travelled or stayed at the country abode of one of his few surviving friends. Otherwise his life was little but a dry routine. I am writing about him here because he typifies a large class—that of the self-illusionists.

He had outlived most of his contemporaries at the Megatherium, and his nearest approach to sociability there was when he stumbled over a member's feet and asked his pardon. But one day a young and new member had picked up and handed him the spectacle-case which he was always mislaying, and gruff old Foss had actually entered into conversation with him. It was a miracle at which the whole room wondered. The fossil was absolutely speaking, and speaking to their youngest member, Toby Pegwell, a budding barrister with whom nobody there had hitherto exchanged many words. The Club's astonishment increased when these conversations day by day continued, when, before long, the old and the young man came always to luncheon together. Marvel of marvels, old Foss and young Pegwell had struck up a friendship. The Club was beginning to think—and the waiters agreed with it—that young Pegwell might become the old fossil's heir.

Toby was an ingratiating young fellow with a talent for life in many directions, and he woke up the dreamless slumbers of the inanimate old man. Gradually, even at the Club, he was being completely changed. His eyes expanded and tried to sparkle,

his face was often lit up with a pleasant smile, and he was not always searching for his spectacles. And if this was so in the public view, it was much more so at the Albany over the dinner-table, to which young Pegwell was constantly invited. The two had become close allies, and the younger had grown to call the elder " Uncle Herbert."

Foss' rooms in the desirable Albany were delightful. The furniture was old-fashioned comfort personified, as was the veteran man-servant who seemed to form part of it. A fine library, good pictures, trophies and relics of many lands adorned the chambers. Everywhere was a sense of refined dignity and reserve. Nothing was pretentious, and the cuisine was of a like order, plain, excellent, admirably served fare of an older day.

Over the graceful Adam mantelpiece hung a striking portrait, the likeness of a beautiful young woman in the dress of nigh forty years earlier. About her was nothing conventional, nothing of the plum-box, nothing simpering or affected. She glowed with feeling and giftedness. It was the sort of beauty that one likes to associate with genius. Occasionally Foss' transformed eyes would stray towards it in the midst of conversation, but instantly they would be withdrawn again as if afraid of fondness. Clearly, Toby mused, here was some hidden and unexpected romance of the past that remained to be revealed, but he was far too delicately-minded and well-bred ever to question the old man about it. When you knew him, you recognized that in his worn memory there must be several sacred shrines at which he worshipped in secret. Uncle Herbert seemed to Toby a man of suppressed sympathies—a deep well from which living waters could be drawn. He delighted to draw out such waters, and he succeeded. Foss took the greatest interest in Toby's career, gave him wise advice, enlivened experience by anecdote, told him much about many things. Toby really loved the old man and would have done anything to serve him. The spell of youth had not worked in vain.

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Toby went out a great deal and was popular in society. With Uncle Herbert's encouragement and influence he was beginning to make a name to the old man's intense pleasure. Toby would unbosom himself as to a father-confessor.

And one day he had somewhat nervously to announce his sudden engagement. They were sitting together after dinner over the port, when Toby suddenly said, "I have a piece of news to give you, sir." "Indeed, Toby, what may it be?"— "I—I am engaged to be married." "Who is she?" said Foss, with the flicker of a smile. "Phyllis is the daughter of Mr. Baggleston, a self-made man but a thoroughly good sort, sir. Her mother is charming, and Phyllis"— "Ah! *I* know. She is perfect." And as he finished his port, Uncle Herbert's eyes wandered towards the portrait.

"I should have consulted you before, sir, but I only proposed to her this afternoon, and then by an irresistible impulse. I do hope that you will approve, Uncle Herbert. I shall not be happy unless you do. I know that you will like Phyllis, but when I say approve, I mean of my getting engaged." "I am sure that I shall," he returned, "and I would not give much for a young man who was not impulsive. Love comes like a thief in the night." "The Club, sir, would be surprised if they heard you say that," said Toby, "and even I am agreeably surprised, I whom you have privileged to stand near the recesses of your heart. You don't mean to say that you, too, have had your own romance, that——" "Indeed I do, dear Toby, and at last I mean to tell you all about it. It will relieve me to do so, though in some ways it will be painful. Come, let us light up our cigars and I will tell you my story. It is not a long one, and it is the only one of the kind that I have to tell."

They sat down by the fire whose fitful gleams seemed to image fantasies, and thus, with a pensive glance, the old man told his tale.

"When I was older than you are I used to climb the Swiss Alps and loll in Italy afterwards. I need mention no details of places and people, for what I am about to describe will be a mere adumbration of events. You see that portrait over the mantelpiece. I have noticed your eyes riveted on it as mine are whenever I am alone"—here he sighed—"and I have respected and appreciated your consideration for my feelings in never inquiring about it. It is an exquisite presentment, is it not? but it can give you no idea of the original. She was an incomparable girl, as near perfection as womanhood can be. She was travelling with an aunt. I first met them at Grindelwald, and afterwards at Bellaggio. Her grace of mind and frame, the spiritual

lustre of her eyes which were not eyes but souls, her symmetry, her sympathy, her harmony of being, were more than mortal. Her voice was angelic, and she had been trained to be a great singer, but her health was not robust. She had read all that was worth reading, and understood and could translate it into simplicity for the uninitiated like myself. I fell headlong in love with her, or rather into adoration of her, for she seemed half-divine. It was presumptuous for me, I know, even to dream of winning her, but from the first moment of our meeting we were great friends, and I could not help feeling that she regarded me with favour."

Here emotion overcame him and for a space he paused, burying his face in his hands, but after a moment's effort his narrative was resumed. " We were, as I said, at Bellaggio and had crossed the enchanted lake to climb the steep upland, with its wayside Calvary, that leads to the pathetic Church of the Madonna of Succour. I carried our repast in a basket, and after we had refreshed ourselves, we sat down in the shade on a bench of the ancient terrace to enjoy the wonderful view, as it were a glimpse of paradise, perfect in purity of colour and outline. The curly-headed urchins who might have stepped out of one of Luini's pictures played around us and offered their fruit and flowers. Just before it was time to descend, if we were to catch the evening boat, I could contain myself no longer. I poured out my inmost heart, and, to my amazement, she accepted it and me. My joy was such that I could not believe myself mortal, and happy beyond words was our return. Her aunt sanctioned the engagement on condition that we should wait a year. In the summer the English climate would not harm her, and they would come over for the wedding; meanwhile, when my business permitted, I might join them as often as I could. Alas, alas, after a month of ecstasy I was never to see her again." Here once more his trembling voice paused, and his young friend grasped his hand. They both gazed at the portrait. " Only one thing more," continued old Foss. " Before I left, I begged that she would give a sitting to a very great French artist who happened to be staying in our hotel. She consented, and so she still speaks and lives."

It was near midnight and Toby felt that he must leave his interlocutor alone. Suddenly he turned to the young man and assured him of the keenest interest in his love-affair. When

would Toby bring the young lady to see him? Toby told him that the future Mrs. Pegwell and her parents were leaving town the day after to-morrow, and to-morrow night he was taking them to the theatre. "But if I might bring her on their return, that would be delightful, and——" Foss had quite recovered, his voice no longer faltered as he interrupted with "Toby, a happy thought after so many unhappy ones. Persuade them all to sup with me after the theatre. I will take no denial, mind. No, it won't keep me up too late. It will give me something to which I can look forward. I shall count upon it. Au revoir until to-morrow. Good-night, my dear fellow, and God bless you!"

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A sumptuous meal was waiting, and near it the eager Foss, when Toby, all excitement, ushered in his dear Phyllis with his prospective parents-in-law. "This is my dear Uncle Herbert," was his introduction. Phyllis fully answered her lover's description, and Uncle Herbert beamed on her. Mr. Baggleston, with his hearty laugh, bluff appearance, blustering manner, and civic side-whiskers, needed no explanation. And Mrs. B. (as he always called her) had evidently once been pretty and was much better bred than her husband. "What a snug little box this is!" exclaimed Mr. Baggleston, looking round, as his custom was, with his hands in his trouser-pockets. "Herbert has been telling us all about it." "And of you," added Mrs. Baggleston with a sweet smile. "Can we thank you enough for all your kindness to him, and through him, to us, this evening?" They sat down, and the champagne flowed. Mr. Foss at once put them at ease, and asked what sort of play they had seen and how they had liked it. "Oh," replied the future father-in-law, "pretty well. It was one of those sentimental plays, you know, where people are always falling in love—eh, Phyllis?—and imagining themselves in heaven and then being put down in their proper places on earth, and then being parted through misunderstandings, and then being married after all—the usual stuff and humbug. There was nothing of that sort about our wedding, was there, old woman? An up and down sort of play, I call it." And he drank another glass.

"I like sentimental plays," returned Mrs. B. "I am sentimental myself," whereat her husband guffawed, took another

glass, and kept looking round, as if he were valuing the room for probate. "Hallo!" he suddenly blurted out as he ticked off the portrait above the mantelpiece in his mind with the rest of the furniture, "Hallo! Well, I'm blest." The general conversation ceased as if it had been run over by a motor-car. All of them felt uncomfortable. "What is it, Adolphus?" asked his wife. "I beg your pardon, Mr. Foss," Mr. Baggleston continued in tones even louder than before. "I'm a child of nature, as they say, and I am not ashamed of it. This is the rummest thing I remember. I'm looking at that fine portrait of a girl over there, and blowed if I haven't seen it before somewhere. I shall recollect in a minute or so, if you will give me time. I don't mind saying that I'm a bit of a judge of pictures myself, pictures and horses, and I'm not ashamed of it." "Well," quietly interposed the host, "Well?" Mr. Baggleston slapped his knee. "Now blest if I haven't got it. I've such a memory, Mr. Foss. It all comes back to me like yesterday. I knew I was right." "What comes back to you? Mr. Baggleston, I am anxious to hear": and he looked rather pale. "Of course you are," resumed the blusterer, "I knew you would be. It is the very rummest coincidence I ever knew in all my life," and his glass was drained again. "You see, when I started in life I was a pawnbroker. I'm not ashamed of it, no one shall say that honest Joe Baggleston is ashamed of his beginnings. I started as a pawnbroker in a very small way—it was very soon a big way, I warrant you. Well, one afternoon, who should enter my shop but a run-to-seed, unshaven artist with a foreign name which I forget, and a parcel which he unwraps and from it produces the very picture that hangs up yonder. "How much will you advance on this?" says he. I knew at first sight that it was the work of no ordinary painter; she was a damned fine girl, and I was sorry for the poor chap, so I offered him ten pounds which at that time I could ill afford. I hung it in my shop-window, and sure enough about a month afterwards in strolls a gentlemanly young fellow who had taken a fancy to the thing, and he gave me twenty pounds for it, he did, saying that it reminded him of someone, not very like, certainly, but the sort of thing—someone who had been on the stage, I think he said, but can't quite remember. That's all, infernally odd, isn't it, Mr. Foss?" "Very," replied Mr. Foss. "Such replicas are rare, aren't they?"

Toby was watching Uncle Herbert and began to understand, though he could not quite penetrate the mystery. Mrs. Baggleston was also watching him and did understand, intuitively, and she felt for and with him. "What a queer story," she said to her husband, "but these things often happen, don't they? One has been very fond of someone, one sees something that reminds one of him or her, one cherishes it, weaves dreams around it, broods on them till one believes that the portrait was the person. I could do the same myself, and that is why I like sentimental plays, Joseph." "Bless my soul, how late it is," blurted out Joe, as the chiming clock struck one. "We must not keep you up any longer, Mr. Foss, and besides I told the chauffeur to wait for us. Herb, see Phyllis to the car. Come along, old woman. Thanks a thousand, Mr. Foss, for your great hospitality. On our return from Norway, I do hope that you will honour our humble home, and tell me all about the portrait. Damned odd, wasn't it? Good-night."

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Toby returned to find his devoted friend huddled in the arm-chair, looking very tired and very miserable as he gazed at the portrait. He knelt down before him and took his hand. "Dear, dear Uncle Herbert," he said, "I am so ashamed of Baggleston." "You are not ashamed of *me?*" sighed the old man. "The portrait, dear Toby, was no replica. And it was I who bought it ever so long ago from this pawnbroker. It *did* remind me of someone, believe me, Toby, but all this was long ago. Round that portrait has clustered a real romance. Every dream that I ever had lives in it, clings to it, and not till to-night did I ever wholly doubt the exact truth of what I told you. The portrait is my reality, the person portrayed was only a will-o'-the-wisp. We are such stuff as dreams are made of. Is not that true of everything that moves the heart? Oh do forgive me, Toby dear, and be happy in your own dreams." The old man bowed his head.

"You will unman me if you say much more, my dearest friend," almost sobbed Toby. "Forgive!—what have *I* to forgive? It is I who beg your forgiveness. But for that odious Baggleston you would have been comforted for all the rest of your days. It is noble of you to have had such a dream, yes, I understand everything." And then, with a forced laugh,

" Didn't even the Prince Regent, sir, dream that he had been present at the Battle of Waterloo ? "

" My comfort now," replied old Foss, " must be in you and your Phyllis, if both of you will let me. They will give me new dreams about you and yours. Good-night."

II.—THE GYPSY BOY

It is a fine midsummer night. Mr. and Mrs. Gallin are sitting in the large room, misnamed the " Library " by the owner of Stanley Towers, Wimbledon. It abuts on a large suburban garden shimmering under the moonlight. It is a great evening for Mr. and Mrs. Gallin. In the first place their only child Doris has just become engaged to a rising barrister, and in the second—which is the more important—the portly Mr. Gallin is on the eve of retiring from business and is balancing his accounts at a large walnut bureau near the French windows that give on to the garden. He is the wealthy proprietor of some famous drapery-stores that have made his fortune, and it is pleasant to watch his evident satisfaction as he mops his brow. He began small, as a country lad ; he ends big, as a thriving citizen, a modern Dick Whittington, for he is within an ace of the Lord Mayoralty. Things have gone passing well with Alderman Jabez Gallin, and his wife, knitting at the other end of the room, has a right to be proud of her Jabez, who married her in early youth when they both had to struggle.

She is a homely, but still comely woman, of the sort that would hold your head if you felt unwell on a rough channel passage. By special request she has stopped the gramophone on the pedestal near her, and is listening to the crystal wireless by her side during the intervals of her work. The night is so warm that Jabez has doffed his dinner-jacket, and has been making his calculations from the huge ledgers in his shirt-sleeves. He is a very warm man, too, in the monetary meaning of the word, for as he turns round to face her, with a jerk of his swivel-chair, he holds up a sheet of foolscap triumphantly, with the exclamation of " Splendid, it's splendid, Mother ! How much do you think I'm worth ? "—" Not half as much as you deserve, or as you *are*," replies his wife. " But guess."—" Oh, I'm sure I don't know : I'm not good at figures. But whatever it is it

will be very nice for Doris." " And for us, I should hope, old thing. You always think of nothing but Doris. The future Lord Chancellor must look after her a bit first. Now guess. How much ? " and he brandished the paper furiously.—" I give it up, Jabez." " Eighty thousand pounds. There ! It's about time for me to retire. I've worked very hard, haven't I ? And it's all honest money. I'm about sick of business, and we'll take a nice big place in the country, dear—a tip-topper, where I shall be the squire and you the squiress. Ever since those early days at Caddlewell—you remember them—I've longed for a country life and country sports. We couldn't afford them then, but now I mean to buy and enjoy them, there ! "—" I don't know, for my part, that I am so very sweet on the country, Jabez. For one thing, it would be such a long way from Doris, wouldn't it ? "—" Why, bless my soul, what's come over the old woman ? Long way from Doris ! What's a hundred miles in a motor or a train ? You are speaking through your new hat, dear."—" And then, Jabez, it might be a little dull. The old folks mightn't call on the new folks."—" Oh ! Won't they ? We'll soon see about that. I would wait till my Lord Mayoralty is over, certainly. Who wouldn't visit a Lord Mayor, eh ? There's another conundrum for you."—" I am not so sure about that, Jabez. Anyhow, there'd be no shops or theatres, and we are known and respected here. I've quite forgotten my country ways as I fancied you had. And then, Jabez, it might be a little lonely."—" Lonely, stuff and nonsense, we'll soon make the place hum. I shall have some good shooting and fishing. Lonely ! Nonsense ! "—" Yes, lonely, Jabez. I'm getting a trifle nervous. Listen, dear. I went for a walk yesterday afternoon in those lanes near the far end of Wimbledon Common, almost countrified, you know. And suddenly I came across a camp of gypsies. I can't bear gypsies, Jabez. They make one feel so outlandish. And one of their women wanted to tell my fortune."—" Rubbish, old thing. I never knew you'd get the high-strikes as you grew older. You are so sensible. There's nothing to fear from gypsies, and if she had told your fortune, it would have been a pretty good one, eh ? "—" I daresay, Jabez, but I detest them all the same. One followed me ever so far." " Followed you ? " " Yes, a boy, Jabez, a dark, daredevil-looking boy. I was frightened out of my wits. I turned straight back and walked on as quickly as ever I could.

I never looked round, but I heard his footsteps pattering behind me—up to about a quarter of an hour from our house. I didn't like to tell you before, for I knew how busy you'd be. But I was terribly upset. I haven't got over it yet. And if we were to go and live right in the country for good, I should be scared every day. Caddlewell used to be full of gypsies, near the forest."—" Poor old dear ; it *is* odd too. But there's nothing in it, nothing, believe me. If it happens again, I'll tell the police. Now don't bother your dear old head. *I'll* see to everything. You have done too much to-day, and that was a very long walk for you. And then there has been all that excitement about Doris' engagement. You are overwrought. Now just you go to bed, dear, and rest. You'll be as fresh as a daisy to-morrow. Bless my soul, it's half-past ten. Bedtime, female scuttling-time, old girl, off you go, under doctor's orders."—" Yes, I am a bit overdone, Jabez. And don't *you* stay up too late either, promise me ; on no account sit up for Doris' return from her dance."—" Oh, never fear, old woman. There are only a few things that still want looking to in my ledgers. Eighty thousand pounds at the least, and all well-invested ! No gypsies can rob us of that, dear."

He kissed her tenderly, went out into the hall, lit her candle, and returned to bury his head once more in his accounts. It did not take him long to complete them. He rose, locked the bureau, mixed a tumbler of whisky and soda which stood as usual with other drinks on a side table, lit a cigar, and stood at the open window. It was very sultry, but a slight breeze fanned the flowers which scented the night. He felt very happy and grateful for this crown of his career. Eighty thousand pounds !

Suddenly he heard a sound as of something rustling through the bushes, and before he had time to search, a form emerged, the figure of a lithe, dark gypsy boy, who stood before him under the moonlight.

" You young rascal," cried the master of the house, making for him, and hauling him by the collar, " how dare you trespass on my grounds ! " The lad seemed not in the least dismayed. He looked at him innocently full in the face, and answered quite frankly, " Indeed, you are making a mistake, Mr. Gallin. I'm no trespasser." He relaxed his hold : there was something unreal about this lad. " Then what the devil are you ? " he exclaimed, " and how do you know my name ? What

impertinence!" "It is not impertinence, believe me, sir," was the reply in a wistful, far-away voice like the sound of some unearthly music floating in the air. "*My* name is Gallin, too. You are Mr. Gallin, senior, I am Gallin, junior." "You damned young scoundrel," vociferated Mr. Gallin again, "how dare you tell such lies! I'm old enough to be your grandfather. I believe *you* must be the impudent vagrant who frightened my dear wife out of her wits this afternoon by following her home. If you don't take care and make yourself scarce very soon, I shall summon the police. There!"—"The police are no more to me, sir, than they are to you. I am only surprised to see you where you are. Do you remember Caddlewell?"—"Caddlewell!" What demon had conjured up this figure of his youth—what the dickens should this gypsy-boy know of him and Caddlewell? A strange uncanny feeling wrapped Mr. Gallin round like a cloak.—"And I never followed Mrs. Gallin this afternoon, sir; you may trust my word," he pleaded; "she must have imagined that she saw me. Perhaps she was thinking of you—and of Caddlewell."—"Well, I'm spiffed," mused Mr. Gallin. Was he awake or asleep? And what was this queer influence that possessed him and held him rooted to the spot?—"I say, sir, *do* you remember Caddlewell, and the little farmhouse where you and I used to dream of running away to sea? And do you remember the evening when I and you poached on the fat old squire's preserves, and how we scampered away like hares when the keeper ran after us? And do you remember our run with the beagles, and that long otter-hunt, and that golden afternoon when farmer Risbeck lent us two broken-down nags and we followed the hounds? And many another prank that we played in the open country, and the cricket match where you were run out, and the village-maids at the village dances, and the first of May, and old Figg the one-eyed fiddler, and the marketings and junketings, and old Martha the witch who told our fortunes? Ah, she it was, sir, who lured you away to the towns, didn't she, and shook a bag of gold in your ears, and sent all the romance of the open air to blazes, curse her! *You* went up to London, didn't you, and made your pile while I remained in Caddlewell and have really never left it. It's just the same even in these tame days as ever it was. Most of the old faces have gone, but the new ones look and speak the same. As for the Cat-and-Fiddle alehouse, it's unchanged. No motors can alter it. On the bench outside near the pond,

please God, we'll sit and smoke and chaff and gossip for many a long summer's day to come. What's all this about the new-fangled summer-time? It's always old summer-time at Caddlewell. Look here, sir, I've been watching you to-night—yes, I have—casting up your accounts and rejoicing in your riches. What's gold worth without Caddlewell, what is Age without Youth? Don't hesitate any longer. Take your money while you can and buy that old manor-house at Caddlewell. You always meant to do so when you had turned the stones of the city-pavements into gold. Do so at once. The place is in the market. Purchase Nature while you can—and I'll go with you."

"Well, I'm spiffed," again repeated Mr. Gallin. He had dropped his cigar on to a flower-bed. He scarce knew whether he stood upon his head or his heels. Wonder of wonders, he was going to ask that gypsy boy to come in and drink a glass in the hot night and tell him more, when he looked round, and behold, the vision had vanished. Could he have met his own youth, himself in boyhood? Was this possible at Wimbledon? Was this boy his shadow, his double? With slow steps he re-entered his own doors and locked them up. He sat down on his chair near those ledgers on the walnut bureau, and pondered. And when Doris and her betrothed returned from their dance, they found him there sound asleep. Doris gently woke him by a tap on his shoulder. "I say, Father," she said, "do you know what time it is? You must have been very busy, and Mother will be growing anxious. Good morning, dearest Father; I'm so happy," she whispered. And so, Mr. Gallin at last went to bed.

He bought that manor house at Caddlewell, and neither he nor his dear old wife ever beheld a gypsy again. But the gypsy-boy, by revealing to him the losses of his own heart, had brought them gain indeed. What says Shakespeare?—

> "Like a right gypsy, hath at fast and loose
> Beguiled me to the very heart of loss."

III.—THE FACE AT A WINDOW

This big world of ours is made up of many little worlds, just as our bodies are a conglomeration of corpuscles. There is one of these little worlds, however, that Fiction seems to have left untouched, and this is the railways and their ministrants. It is a rich province with its own atmosphere, customs, and instincts. Who will incarnate the romance of railways, their stations, their signal-boxes, their circumambient interplay of existence? I cannot pretend to do so, but the following sketch has occurred to me as a fresh study in disillusion.

Thomas Gundon was an engine-driver, one of the ablest and proudest in the service. He was a master-mechanic on whose cool, practical head and arm the safety of thousands daily depended. He was a bachelor and nobody ever thought that he would change his mind. He had neither time nor inclination for any of life's by-ways. All his energies were concentred on the highroads. He loved his engines as other men love horses. On *them* his affections were centred. Duty for him overmastered pleasure.

One day as he was driving "Firebrand" at full speed through the Midlands, he noticed a face at a window near the line. The window was that of an old cottage overlooking a rivulet hard by. The face was one that none could easily forget. It was that of a most beautiful girl. Her beauty, which was glowing and southern, seemed to make an appeal for protection. The window was open. Only her head with its dark brown tresses was visible, but her eyes, as it were, shot meteors—signals of distress, and one of them fell on the heart of Tom Gundon. He could not help thinking of and seeing her all the way. Incessantly he dreamed of her. Who was she? It piqued his curiosity as well as his fancy, and of curiosity this lover of engines had more than a man's share.

For two long months he expected for her, so to speak, every

time that he passed that way. Her attitudes changed. Once she was leaning out with extended, imploring arms, while outside a sinister-looking man with matted raven-hair, and outlandishly clothed, was pacing up and down without so much as a glance aloft. His hands were firmly clasped behind his back. Gundon did not like the looks of him at all. Poor girl! Was she waiting for some rescuer, perhaps for him who always drove his trains to a minute? Had she come to learn that minute and expect it? Always her eyes, immovably lustrous, appeared to be fixed on him.

There was a big station not very far off from the spot which held his unknown but cherished sanctuary. A strange suspense haunted him. He could bear it no longer, and on one of his half-days off duty he resolved to plumb the mystery. It so happened that the big station above mentioned was the place on that afternoon where the engine-drivers were exchanged. An unwonted impatience besieged him. By dint of several inquiries he found out the quickest mode of conveyance to the village. He told nobody of his quest. He intended to knock at the door as a pedestrian who wanted to be directed onwards. And so he arrived with eager anticipations. It was a neat little abode with a gay little garden in front of it. He could not descry a trace of his fair and forlorn heroine. Another countenance was dimly visible at the window—that of a moustachioed youth. What villainy was this? Had the poor, despairing creature escaped?

He knocked at the door, which the man whom he had noticed before opened. He did not look such a brute after all. But he was odd, very odd, and clearly a foreigner. His hair was long, his hands were delicate—those of an artist. He spoke in broken English, but was the pink of civility; he told him how to reach the place whither he never intended to go. And then, noting the wayfarer's hot and dusty condition, he asked him if he would not share his tea (which he called thé) with him. Gundon thanked him and accepted the kind invitation. Now perhaps he might solve the riddle. Everything in the parlour was faultlessly neat. The man made his own tea and placed some appetising little sugared cakes on the table. He had made them himself, he said, after a family recipe. They were French, and he was a Frenchman. So both sat down, and Gundon was just pondering how to approach his subject when his host anticipated him; he was very communicative

and affable. Indeed, he was effervescent. He told Gundon that he was a modeller in wax who had learned his art in Paris, and that from this little abode, where he lived cheaply, he supplied many big shops with those wax groups of gesturing ladies, imposing men and posturing boys that advertised their wares. Hitherto most of them had come from France, and it had been a happy thought of his to emigrate and set up on his own. His business had lately increased by leaps and bounds, and the cottage was now far too small for his requirements. So he was negotiating for a much larger house on the outskirts of London. "But it is an art, my métier, you see, not a commerce. Me, I am artist to the depth. I am sculptor in wax. It gives me joy to create masterpieces. *Voilà*. I show you my *chef-d'œuvre*, my chief-of-works."

Gundon grew more crestfallen each second, but not a muscle of his face betrayed the least disappointment. It would never do for an engine-driver to be laughed at. He followed the little Frenchman into a back-yard, and there, sure enough, propped against a wall, stood the idol of his visions. Hard by, lay large pieces of sacking which were to enswathe it, while a packing-case just finished by the same hands that had fashioned her—as it were her coffin—neighboured the sacking. The little Frenchman stood entranced before his own creation. "My God!" he exclaimed, pointing at her, "but she is beautiful, hein?" Gundon agreed; she was very beautiful. What a pity that she was not alive. This pleased the artist much—"If she live," he said, "she break all 'earts, hein?" And then Gundon laughed. He did not laugh at the pleasantry, he was laughing at himself. What a fool he had been, *what* a something fool!

And yet *had* he been a fool? This wax figure had disclosed an unsuspected quality in himself, the power of loving and admiring other things than engines or himself. The little Frenchman prattled on. He was engaged to a small doctor's daughter in the village: "Ah, but she is adorable, the Mees Anglaise." It was for her that he "travailed." They would soon be married and inhabit that large corner-house which was at Kingstown near Richemonde. And there—did he ask too much?—one day might he welcome his pleasant new acquaintance? He would make *friandaises*, ah delicious! And a *bouillabaisse* soup fit for the gods. Had Monsieur ever tasted *bouillabaisse*? What, no? Then he had never lived.

. . . . . .

Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Gundon in after years were constant visitors at the large house of which Monsieur and Madame Cirefaçon were the honoured owners. And one day Gundon told Monsieur the story of his love at first sight. Cirefaçon laughed a laugh unparalleled—one that made the distant wax models shiver. "Whatever *are* you laughing at?" ejaculated both wives. "Me!" he rejoined, "I laugh at the follies of a wise man."

IV.—TWO INTERVIEWS

(1) Shylock

I have always thought that on the whole Shylock is the most respectable person in Shakespeare's play. That is not saying much, it is true. A more heartless horde of false pleasure-lovers and spendthrifts it would be difficult to imagine. They insult and spit upon the very man whom they cajole into lending them the sinews of amusement. They are bad merchants, flimsy friends, and ignoble egotists who are also parasites. They rob the old man of his heartless daughter, and then, to Venetian jazz-music, the lady-barrister takes the stage with a legal quibble which, whatever the equities, must have shamed the law-courts, culminating in a beautiful sermon on mercy and forgiveness that bore no fruit in her own selfish conduct. Most of them speak "an infinite deal of nothing."

Shylock himself belonged to no aristocracy of his race; he was third-rate of his own kind. But two things distinguish him. He was passionately devoted to the only home that he could call his own—indeed, on whatever might be called his own he was altogether concentred—and he was true to himself. Revenge is never an amiable quality, but it may be, under provocations, a dignified passion. If ever any man suffered those provocations, it was Shylock. None of the other characters are true to themselves, or, mostly, to anyone else in particular. All of them, Portia included, are at best bubbles blown on the breezes of caprice and self-interest. But the hard Shylock remains like granite. You cannot rest on him, but on him you may rely.

It might be supposed that if ever he found a woman to wed him after his enforced baptism, his descendants would be usurers. That is not the case, for the present representative of his house, Lord Sheldock (whose name was changed when his

ancestors settled in England two and a half centuries ago), is a great and philanthropic banker, a pillar of the Church, and a Liberal-Conservative. When I was allowed to interview him, he was sitting in his well-stocked and well-proportioned library, surrounded by signed photographs of eminent persons on the table, and by many ancestral portraits on the walls, himself the picture of courteous benevolence. He was rather proud than otherwise of his pedigree, and showed me a striking picture by Titian of Shylock as a nonagenarian senator of the Venetian Republic. In our conversation he indicated several points that have escaped general observation.

" Shylock," he said, " was cruel, no doubt, but his cruelty was manufactured by the cruelty of others and not innate, as you may see from his pathetic outburst about the ring which his bride had given him and their unnatural offspring had stolen and tossed away. Shakespeare's play is largely tinged with the old ecclesiastical prejudice against interest on money, however moderate, and from this we moderns have bravely recovered ever since the days of King William from the Hague, who, I believe, was financed for his mission to England by some of Shylock's later kindred. But in this regard I wonder if you have ever noticed Antonio's odd inconsistency. After the Doge's pronouncement of sentence, and before Shylock's speechless exit, the generous merchant offers to surrender his own share of Shylock's imposed fine on the express condition that it was to be settled at interest on himself for life with remainder afterwards to Lorenzo and his runaway wife, the daughter who had deserted Shylock. So, then, the very man who based his hatred of Shylock on usury was willing to enjoy an income derived from capital. I cannot find much religious principle in this behaviour, can you ? And, further, are you aware that ' The Merchant of Venice ' was a topical play ? Hearing that Queen Elizabeth was ill, Philip of Spain sent over his Court-physician, Dr. Lopez—probably a ' new Christian '—to prescribe for her. This was much resented, and eventually Lopez was tried and condemned for attempting to poison her, though the evidence must have been at the best ambiguous.

" The play contains several allusions to this *cause célèbre*, ' *Wolfish* cruelty,' referring to the meaning of Lopez, and Shylock's own ' A Daniel come to judgment,' referring to the fact that a Serjeant Daniell had at the last moment to act as judge on commission in place of the judge on circuit who had

been taken ill. Hence this immortal drama comprises much that was intended to catch the breeze of the moment. I only mention these things in passing to show that I do not spring from the type that circularizes everyone with such flattering offers to lend all of us who have attained our majority any amount from one pound to ten thousand on a mere note of hand, and accompanies them with grateful testimonials from orphans, widows and clergymen. Nor indeed from the Communist expropriators who seem lately to have found a fresh centre in Amsterdam. Did you notice on the right-hand corner of Titian's portrait my ancestor's coat-of-arms, which comprises a sheathed knife and the three golden balls that already figured on the De' Medici escutcheon? I believe that Shylock's second wife was one of that proud Florentine family. I inherit these arms and am not ashamed to bear them."

And then our conversation turned on the usual topics of weather, politics, sport, and scandal, what would happen if ever the banks were "nationalized," or further internationalized than they are at present, and much more than I have space to recount. You may have seen it all in the *Morning Trumpeter* under the heading of "Lord Sheldock Speaks His Mind: A Special Interview." But you will not find there the historical comments which I have here detailed. History is not the forte of Interviews, but it is worth remembering all the same.

(2) Satan

I need hardly say that my second commission as interviewer had nothing to do with the black art which I abhor or the demonology which I despise. I was requested to call on the cosmopolitan Baron de Luciferre at Claridge's, and I was told that he resorts to London during the summer months when our climate suits him. We all know how bored he is ever since the world's wickedness has given him so little further scope for improvement. But not all, I fancy, recognize what a reformed rake he has become. He gave me a cordial welcome and begged me to ask my first question. I reminded him that quite lately an excellent bishop had been publicly deploring his withdrawal from the public consciousness. It was sad to think, his lordship had said, how little we now believed in Satan, and how completely his winter and spiritual residence had vanished from view. Did he agree?

" Really," commented the pleasant and placid Baron, with a repressed yawn, " Really, your narrow prelates are often absurd. Why should anyone respect a personage who has lost his identity as I have ? During the last century or so I am bored to extinction. Everything bad is done without any intervention of mine. It would be inartistic as well as useless to debase men further. So I have embarked on a new rôle, that of relativity, as your latest philosophers term it. Yes ! Everything is relative, nothing is positive. *You* are relative to your time and circumstances or you would not be an interviewer. Virtue and Vice themselves are relative, and what is good in one place often seems bad in another—the apostle of relativity in its metaphysical aspect is himself relative to relativity. Without it he would be nothing. It is true that this is only the old Greek theory of " flux," but what does that matter ? Everything is new, yet everything is old. Your bishop himself is relative to the spirit, or should I say the milk-and-water, of his age ; also to his clergy whom he cannot keep in order. I myself play this new game with pleasure. There is nothing positive about me any more, and you may tell everybody that I say so. I am relative." And he took a cigarette which he had no need to light.

Staggered by his candour, I was racking my brains for the next interrogatory when of his own accord he resumed. " I know," he said, with a smile, " what, on account of your relativity, you are hesitating to utter. You are wishing to hear some authoritative account of my brief biography in your little world which now is hardly worth a visit on my part—still less a visitation. Well, you shall have my views. The mediæval caricatures of me with hoofs, horns and a tail (which your bishop wishes, I suppose, to revive) were not only revolting but ridiculous. Even in my old worst days, which, thank Someone, have passed, I should never have been such a fool as to disgust everyone. In more revolutionary crises I have been identified with Reason—as if I should have been so unreasonable as to be so. And in the French Regency period the sinners were so anxious to see me that they invoked me by the silliest incantations : at the best they saw little else but a black cat. This wish to visualize or materialize me has led to the vilest slanders : people imagined that I was cast in their image. Now, of course, that I am relative, I can show myself as I relatively am. And in literature how much I have been maligned. Your

Burns, for instance, your Shelley, what nonsense they talk! The latter, if I remember, imaged me as 'a shop-merchant from Wapping.' What drivel! I won't speak of Goethe, who, to my mind, has vulgarized my man-of-the-worldliness during that transition-period. Mephisto, you will agree, is extremely provincial—a mere *petit-maître*.

"And as for Don Juan and his Statue, it is preposterous. As if I could ever have been petrified! No," he went on, "the sole writer that has ever done me justice is your Milton. He pictured me as I was in my vigorous prime, whereas now I am jaded and rather worn-out. Perhaps you think that Dante succeeded. Pooh! He was far too much of a theologian to have the slightest conception of the life I and his own wife led him."

Here I felt that it was time to change the subject. "May I venture to ask how your barony came to be bestowed?" "How is anyone's barony bought?" he answered. "By a cheque, of course, a cheque to which its drawer's public services are relative." At this juncture a telegram arrived. "Please forgive me," he said, "I must be off. I have an appointment with my solicitors—a libel-suit, and then another with my stockbroker. All is relative on the Stock Exchange, you know. Time is everything there, which is a pleasant contrast with eternity. Give my kindest and most relative regards to the bishop. Au revoir." He or I vanished—I forget which.

V.—A HEROINE INDEED

Clara Lindon had been in domestic service, and she was still young when she left it to get married. After a short and childless union her husband died. The widow worked hard at odd jobs for her living. From six to eight daily she attended three sets of chambers in the Temple where she acted as a widow-of-all-work. She had little rest, but one great joy, her friendship with Isabel Jute, also a young widow, with two dear little cherubs of children—a girl and a boy whom she loved and admired as much as did their mother. Then the next blow fell. Isabel died. On her death-bed she implored Clara to give the children a home. This Clara promised to do, and her word was her bond. For thirteen long years she toiled all the more because she must now somehow manage to save. Her affection for these two children knew no bounds. She would willingly have died for them, if only she could thereby secure their happiness. She tended their childhood, made and mended their clothes, supervised their schooling, brought them up, to her pride, as good, God-fearing, industrious members of the community. Luckily she was very strong, found time for everything, and never broke down under the protracted strain. All her savings were placed in a popular deposit-bank which gave a high rate of interest.

The time arrived to place the children in life, and she had already planned to give them twenty pounds each as a start in the trades which they had chosen. On the very day when she trudged to that bank to draw out her savings she found a long queue of people waiting outside. The doors were closed, and on them stood an announcement which passed from mouth to mouth. The bank had failed.

She could hardly believe herself alive. What was she to do? Whatever happened, that girl and boy for whom she had slaved were not to be disappointed. Their whole career might

hang on these beginnings, and whether the bank would or would not eventually be able to make any distribution to their poor depositors, it would take a long time to disclose. What should she do, what *could* she do? She walked and walked, almost unconsciously, with one thing only alive in her mind. Suddenly she faced some huge Stores brimful of bustle and tempting glitter. A horrible voice whispered in her ear, "Go in. Steal something valuable and sell it. You will be able to repay it before very long. I will guide you to the counter." She entered.

. . . . . .

Clara Lindon was duly tried. Witnesses testified to her self-sacrificing affection, her untiring industry, her excellent character up to that fell moment. Had the prisoner anything to say? Yes, she had something to say. She assured the Court that she never dreamed that she would have lived to see that day. Her heart was as honest as it had ever been. What she had now done had been done deliberately, for she loved those children more than her own life or soul. The bank had burst and she must get money for those beloved children somehow, somewhere. She would serve her sentence and then by renewed labour she would manage to repay her prosecutors. She never in any way wished to defraud them, but she was forced by hard circumstance to do so. She asked for no mercy. She would serve her time.

Among those absent from the trial were those two beloved children. Clara did serve her sentence and did repay her prosecutors. But the two beloved children for whom she had worked night and day, whom she had taken to her heart, for whom she had perforce sacrificed the ideal of her perfect record, refused ever to speak to her again. They were too respectable. Before the Moloch of respectability these young pharisees forced the adopted mother who had hallowed their lives to walk through the furnace. She was a noble woman, a heroine indeed. And this is a true history, well worthy of record.

VI.—A SORCERESS

Liz was a flower-girl, and she was passionately in love with Bill, who was a costermonger. All of a sudden Bill ceased his attentions, and took up with another and inferior girl, " no class "—a hawker of bootlaces. Liz was in despair. How was she to win her Bill back—Bill the staunch, the true, the smart ? Her heart would break if she could not recall him ; recall him she must. Of course she was superstitious : she believed in cards or tea-leaves as infallible predictors of fate. Every trifle that happened each day was, for her, "lucky" or the reverse. She knew that his new infatuation had been caused by some unholy powers. And she searched the little box of mysterious relics that her mother, a " wise woman," God rest her soul, had left her. Maybe there was something in that shabby casket that might help her. There was. Among the recipes and prescriptions scrawled in an illiterate handwriting she lit on the following : " To get back a fatheless lover. At the full mune take a brazier to a waist place. Kindull it, and thro into the flams too peces of rue, sum mint, sum Luv-lies-bleeding, sum ragwurt and a fu grans of solfor. The smoke will ris. Bend over it for sum minits and pray him back. He will cum."

Her only difficulty was the waste place. Some kind, unknown influence made her remember one. It was at Bream's End, where a number of little old houses were being demolished to make room for a big, ever-so-high and spacious pile of business premises. The work went slowly, and in the front of chaos there remained a mangy patch of ground only screened off from the street by a straggling, scraggy advertisement-hoarding, with gaps between its ragged timbers. Through one of these gaps her slender form could find entrance. As for the brazier, she borrowed it for an hour from one of the hot-chestnut-roasters. The ingredients she had bought.

It was the full " mune " right enough, and a frosty one too.

Her only fear was of the night-watchman, but she knew that at ten o'clock he always went out to refresh himself at the Goat and Compasses. She chose her moment. There she stood shivering while she lit her small brazier and cast her spells into it, just as if she had been Horace's Canidia with her classical incantations. The flames flared, she bowed her head over them and prayed to the unseen Powers : " O send my Bill back, send him back to me ! " These words she repeated over and over again, till at last she almost shrieked them aloud with an agonized wail that would have softened a heart of stone. There she stood transfixed under the freezing moonbeams, a soul in anguish, belonging to no period or creed or race, just a tortured spirit shuddering in the icy cold. She recked neither of time nor place. She only felt that she was there alone for a quarter of an hour which seemed to her everlasting. Would he come ? She seemed to hear voices and started, shivering again. It was the watchman who spoke first. " My Gosh, who's that ?—I shall get it hot, *I* shall." And then as his companion drew nearer, these were the words that, half-consciously, she heard, " My Gawd, it's Liz, my girl Liz ! Oh, Liz dear, whatever are you a-doing of ? " She turned and faced him, crying with lips aquiver, " I'm dying to bring you back to me, Bill, to—bring—you—back." Bill tried to tell her all, how fondly he loved her, how he had been led away by a wanton, how he was looking and longing for her, how he would ever be her true and lawful mate, how he had met the watchman at the pub, how they had drunk a glass or two together, how the whole time he was thinking of nobody but his lost Liz, how he would never leave her or forsake her. He embraced and kissed her again and again. But it was too late. Liz had fainted, and three weeks afterwards she was dead of pneumonia.

EPILOGUE

Our little voices rise and fall,
  They fall and rise and come and go.
For Echo is the sum of all
  That floats and lingers here below.
Beneath the clouds, beneath the host
  Of heaven's enstarred, unbending eyes,
We flit as hastes a passing post,
  Or like a bird that skims the skies.

But Faith and all-uniting Love
  These wandering voices still ensphere,
And merge in heights of lights above
  The flicker of our candles here.
The soul, however faint its flight,
  However dim the song it sings,
Is not a post that cleaves the night,
  Is not a bird of earthly wings.

THE END

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